

## Chapter- 2

### The Tale of a Vagrant

Ruskin Bond, an Indian author of British descent, has been writing for more than five decades and has written around three hundred short stories, essays, and novellas. He is one of the most prolific Indian writers and is a pioneer in the field of children literature. In 1992, he received Sahitya Akademi award and in 1999, he was awarded Padma Shri for his immense contribution to children literature.

Bond's character, Rusty, is the protagonist of all the five volumes of Rusty series which provide a complete account of Rusty's life. The character of Rusty is left free to be interpreted by the readers in their own way. His character is not static. In his character, the process of development is conspicuous. A close analysis of Rusty reveals that he symbolizes a journey of life. He attains ripeness towards the end. There is a constant movement towards maturity. Cherishing a definite aim, he matures from a boy to an awakened man. We witness an introvert like Rusty becoming a responsible youth. Through his character, Ruskin explains how a character affects his environment or surroundings, and vice versa. There is a sense of harmony that exists between his character and his surroundings.

Rusty is the central character that features in Ruskin Bond's Rusty series. The story of the first novel of the series, *Rusty: The Boy from the Hills*, starts in the hills of Dehra where he resides with his grandparents. His parents got separated when he was in the tender age of four. After the separation, according to the novel, his father went to Burma while his mother remarried. This novel traces Rusty's progression from a child to a teenager. The relationship he shared with the various people, who form an important part of his life, will be explored and explained thoroughly. The early part of

the novel covers the early formative years of Rusty, which is from the age of seven to nine years. The early formative years form a very crucial part of a child's personality.

This novel can be divided into three parts. The first part deals with Rusty's life at his grandparents' house in Dehra. The second part focuses on his relationship with his father and the third part revolves around Rusty and his grandmother.

Rusty shared a very close and loving relationship with his grandfather. His grandfather, a British native, loved India and had found solace in the hills of Dehra. After his retirement from the Indian Forest Services, he had built a house on the outskirts of Dehra and planted all sorts of trees around it. This explains the strong association he had with nature. By nature, he means not just the 'flora' but 'fauna' as well. He also had a hobby of keeping strange pets. The bond between Rusty and his grandfather was so deep that it formed the basis of his personality.

Rusty's grandfather was deeply attached to nature. Time and again, he could be seen in the garden either clearing the weeds or planting new trees. Rusty was deeply influenced by his grandfather's affection towards nature. Walking on the footsteps of his grandfather, he evolved as an environment friendly child. He exclaimed about his own fascination with trees. He was so inspired and swayed by his grandfather's commitment and love towards nature that it got inculcated into his own behavior. As a result, his gentleness towards the nature extended beyond the walls of the grandfather's house. Both used to go to the jungle frequently to plant trees of different and rare kinds. Rusty's attachment to nature was to such an extent that the sheer thought of treeless world was enough to disturb him.

Nature played a major role in the development of Rusty's character. Since childhood, we have found him in the lap of nature. His grandfather was influential in instilling environmental awareness in his mind. Here, it is quite evident that the presence of grandfather was very important for Rusty to enjoy the beauty of nature. He felt lonely and lost in his grandfather's absence. Along with the love for nature, consisting largely of trees, huge love was also showered on the animals. Animals and humans gel well in this novel. Rusty's grandfather had an interesting hobby of keeping unusual animals as pets. By unusual pets, it means the pets which are usually not considered to be domestic in nature. For instance, his grandfather owned a tiger cub called Timothy, a pair of monkeys called Toto and Tutu, and a python. Rusty was highly influenced by his grandfather's unique hobby. He also carried with him his pet squirrel, Chips, wherever he went. Since Rusty had no siblings, these animals were his closest friends.

The enormous love for animals that Rusty exhibits is definitely the result of huge influence of his paternal grandfather. His grandfather's behavior of interacting with the unusual pets reinforces Rusty to explore further the possibility of having such unusual pets of his own. It was this habit of grandfather, of keeping pets around the house, which had made Rusty a very brave person. Therefore, be it the tiger cub or the python, Rusty was always there, admiring them, taking care of them. When children of such a young age see a ferocious animal like a tiger, they easily get terrified, but Rusty was different. He loved nature so much and with such intensity, that even the most ferocious animal seemed like a kitten to him and vicious breeds like Great Danes were nothing but playmates for him.

Even though Rusty's grandfather played an important and significant role in his personality development, but he was not the only one who influenced the personality of this maturing individual. Rusty's parents got separated when he was only four years old. He was completely heartbroken with this decision taken by them. As his father worked in Burma, he lived with his grandparents in Dehra. Since he did not get along famously with his mother and stepfather, he avoided living with them and preferred staying with grandparents instead. Though Rusty hardly lived with his father, he loved and respected him dearly, and here it's worth mentioning that the love he had for nature was something which he also inherited from his father. His father also had the same enthusiasm and dedication towards nature as Rusty's grandfather had.

Rusty was deeply attached to his father. He gave Rusty all that is expected from a loving and caring parent. It was quite natural for a sensitive child like Rusty to get attached to him. His father filled the vacuum caused by his mother's desertion. Rusty shared a very pleasant and open relationship with him. Under the influence of his father only, he discovered the joys of reading books. A chemistry which an individual shares with perhaps a sibling or a close friend was the kind of relationship and connection Rusty had with his father. Even though they shared the bond of a father and son, their rapport was more like friends.

When Rusty turned nine, he went to Java to live with his father for a few months where his father worked for a firm dealing in rubber. When he went to Java, it was the time when Second World War cropped up and distressed the Far East and thus, he observed a sudden transformation in his environment. We find that Rusty goes beyond his immediate environment, consisting largely of animals and plants,

and starts taking interest in things and events that were not in his immediate environment. His earlier upbringing took place in the hills of Dehra, a complete opposite to the war-ridden Far East. Life was not idyllic in the East as it was in Dehra. Rusty and his father, Mr. Bond, decided to leave Java and go to England via Bombay. Rusty and his father left for Bombay in a sea plane which, in the middle of the way, stopped functioning and crashed, but fortunately they escaped unhurt. They didn't get hurt, but they had to spend days at a stretch in the ocean on a small dinghy. Even the food and water supplies were limited. During their journey through sea, everybody around was scared, worried, and nervous but Rusty was quite calm as compared to everyone else. He found companionship and solace in his father's presence. Whenever he was with his father, his spirits soared and he felt braver in situations where a normal individual would hyperventilate. His father's presence was all he needed to make him feel stronger and braver.

The strength of his father's personality was very important to him. He always felt secure in his presence so much so that, in the presence of his father, even a potentially dangerous event or situation proved no longer dangerous for him. Here, we can observe the similarity of effects that his father and grandfather had on Rusty. In the presence of his grandfather, he never felt threatened by the wild and unusual animals and in the presence of his father, he did not feel threatened and afraid in the adverse situations of life. Although under different conditions and circumstances, both his father and grandfather had similar influence on Rusty.

Soon after, life took a horrible turn when Rusty's father died due to periodic bouts of malarial fever. At this point, feeling of incompleteness and heartbrokenness took over him. What broke him further was that he was not even allowed to attend his

father's funeral as his relatives felt that being a young boy of just eleven years, he would not be able to handle the grief. What they failed to understand was that his father was his world. They shared a high level of emotional connection, and that connection made its impact on Rusty's personality. He was known to be a very sensitive child. Being of such a tender age, he found it extremely difficult to reconcile with the fact that his father was no longer alive. When something as deep and shocking as his father's death took place, he detached himself from the world. He preferred to be quiet, as he believed that no one would understand the pain he was going through.

At a very gentle age, Rusty had to face and go through various ordeals of life. Due to Rusty's deep and profound attachment with nature, he found solace in it. After his father's death, Rusty found emotional compensation in the world of nature. He took nature's help to delude death. Nature provided a sense of parental security which he craved for at that moment. Nature had assumed the role of a guardian for him. When dejected and gloomy, nature helped Rusty to emerge out of his personal loss. After his father's demise, Rusty's mother took him to her house for a few days. When Rusty was living with his mother and stepfather, he passionately missed the affection and warmth that his father showered on him.

With the death of his grandfather and father, the only closest relative left was his grandmother. He adored his grandmother and even though she did not approve of some of his antics, she too loved him dearly. Grandmother was always annoyed with the grandfather's hobby of keeping strange pets and when she saw that this hobby was keenly inculcated in Rusty, she gave up all the hopes of doing anything about it. She herself loved nature very much. She had a pet parrot, Popeye, who was extremely

clever and sharp. Grandmother, like grandfather, liked the house to be surrounded by trees.

But his grandmother was a bit old-fashioned in her thoughts, and was biased towards her own community. She never wanted or rather allowed him to mix with the village children. However, his thoughts differed from that of his grandmother. He respected and loved her immensely but could not agree with her on the point that he shouldn't interact with the village children. He detested her old-fashioned views. Consequently, when a village boy named Ramu offered to teach him how to swim, he graciously accepted the offer and soon he befriended Ramu, who not only taught him how to swim, but also acquainted him with the Hindu mythology.

Rusty was attached to his grandfather, grandmother and father in his early formative years, but there were other relatives and people with whom he was associated either by choice or by force. For instance, he had to bear with his Uncle Ken as he did not really like him. Young kids made his uncle nervous, which Rusty found rather odd. In addition to that, he never appreciated grandmother's cooking, which irritated Rusty. Moreover, Uncle Ken could not stand any of the unusual pets they kept around the house. So, time and again, Rusty would get back at his uncle by irritating and making him nervous. Another person Rusty was associated with out of sheer force was his mother. A huge part of him found it difficult to forgive his mother for deserting him at the tender age of four. Rusty had a couple of aunts and he didn't like them too for different reasons. His Aunt Mabel was very fussy, and his Aunt Ruby was also intolerant towards the pets that roamed in the house freely.

When Rusty lived in Bombay for a few months before his father's demise, a nanny, fondly called Ayah, was hired to take care of Rusty. He was a young nine year

old boy who needed care and attention which his father was unable to give all the time due to his work. Ayah took very good care of Rusty, and they shared a very close and sweet relationship. She would give him baths and feed him all the time. So, when Mr. Bond decided to send Rusty to Dehra again, he sent Ayah along with him. She was more than happy to live in Dehra, taking care of Rusty. Though she was a constant person in Rusty's life, he did not get influenced by her thoughts or views at all. She was of a very superstitious nature. Every question asked would have a superstitious reason waiting. Rusty could never really understand these superstitions and hence never took them seriously. Moreover, Ayah too objected vehemently to Rusty's mixing with the villagers. Paying no heed to Ayah's frequent warnings, he made friends with Bansi, the tonga driver, and enjoyed free tonga rides with him for several weeks.

There are certain other characteristics of Rusty which needs to be mentioned. He was a food lover and he absolutely loved the cooking done by his grandmother. Whenever his grandmother tried a new recipe, she would ask Rusty all sorts of questions regarding the dish. Grandmother's roasted duck was his favorite. He was also very inquisitive by nature. His father, when alive, never lost patience with his endless questioning.

Rusty always liked to explore lonely places. He believed that every place and every person, dead or alive, had a past and this mysterious nature of the past enthralled him. For instance, he chanced upon his grandfather's first wife's grave when he was exploring a neglected area. On spotting the tombstone and reading the name of the person it belonged to, he was intrigued to find who she was and why she was buried in rambles instead of a proper cemetery.



Rusty also had an impeccable sense of humor. His humor was something he could have inherited from his grandfather and grandmother, for they were always using their wit at the least expected places. Their chit-chat and wit always had people in splits. This was something that Rusty also inculcated in his behavior. For instance, when he saw the python on the dresser, gazing at his own reflection in the mirror, he said that the python was trying to look good for Aunt Mabel.

Rusty had a wonderful childhood with his grandfather, father and grandmother. He had experiences which one could never forget in his lifetime, but the death of his grandfather and his father hurt him immensely. After their Dehra house was sold, Rusty and his grandmother decided to go to England but destiny had something else in store for them. When he tried to overcome the sorrows, the unforeseen death of his grandmother occurred. After the ill-timed death of his grandmother, Rusty was left with no other choice but to stay with Mr. John Harrison, his father's cousin. With uncertain future, no one knew what fate held in its hand for Rusty. Therefore, tracing the impact of childhood experiences on an individual's complete life becomes the basis of our study of the character of Rusty as it is clearly deduced that his childhood experiences with his family, relatives, and nature made him the individual that he was.

After discussing the impact of the experiences of childhood and early formative years on Rusty's personality, adolescence is the next important phase which further strengthens his character and personality. According to Judith Rich Harris and Robert M. Liebert, "Adolescence is the transitional period from the dependency of childhood to the independence and responsibility of being an adult. At this point in their lives, young people struggle with two fundamental problems: to

redefine their relationships with parents and other adults, and to establish themselves as individuals.” (460)

The second novel, *Rusty Runs Away*, covers the adolescent years of Rusty, from age twelve to seventeen. After the death of his father and grandparents, he was left in the care of Mr. Harrison and his wife. Mr. Harrison was Rusty’s father’s cousin. So, he was the guardian of Rusty. Even though it had been quite some time since Rusty’s father had died, he still was not able to completely recover from the shock. In such a situation, all he needed was the love and warmth of a person close to him, but Mr. Harrison did not treat him with the warmth he ought to have. He was extremely strict and authoritative, something which Rusty did not like at all.

Mr. Harrison was a staunch British. He disliked the idea of Rusty mingling with the Indians. He had clearly warded off Rusty from having any kind of interaction with the Indians. The significant people in the early life of Rusty, like his father, grandfather, and grandmother, were the people who did not put many restrictions on his activities and choices of people with whom he could interact.

However, one day, Rusty saw a young girl from the window of his room and they became friends soon after. Her name was Koki and she was an Indian girl. They started spending their whole day capturing the magical moments through the window of Rusty’s room on the roof. Whenever Rusty spent time with Koki, it was in the absence of Mr. Harrison and his wife. This shows the tendency of an adolescent to defy the rules and do as the individual desires. But soon afterwards, Koki left Dehra. Rusty was, of course, disappointed and he closed the window forever. Even as the novel traces the adolescent phase in Rusty’s life and the various encounters and situations he comes across in this journey, nature still continues to play a very

important role in his life. Whenever he feels lonely, he gazes out of the window and notices the beauty and vastness of nature.

It was this love for nature that both Rusty and Miss Mackenzie (one of the Dehra residents) shared that provided a premise for a sweet relationship to harbor between a twelve year old boy and an elderly woman. It all started when, one day, Rusty was spotted and caught by Miss Mackenzie while he was silently and cautiously plucking wild flowers from her garden. But she felt no anger and instead of punishing him, she let him off the hook. She saw that he was interested in nature and knew a lot about flowers. On being asked, Rusty expressed his desire to become a botanist. His desire to be a botanist showed a sensitive side of his personality. Miss Mackenzie gifted him a very valuable book named *Flora Himaliensis*. This was the beginning of a beautiful bond between Rusty and Miss Mackenzie. This bond between the two was definitely the result of her kind behavior towards him and the gesture of giving a very valuable gift to him was an outcome of that bond. Since Miss Mackenzie lived alone, he visited her often and they discussed about the various flowers which could be found in the Himalayan region.

Rusty's behavior towards Miss Mackenzie further augments the idea that he had a sensitive nature. The maturity and patience that is needed while dealing with an elderly person is something very rare in the adolescent age, but Rusty possesses the qualities of endurance, maturity, and sensibility to maintain such a relationship. His bond with Miss Mackenzie was also based on some personal reasons. The first reason was that she had a deep knowledge of wild flowers, something Rusty had in-depth interest in. The second reason was that Miss Mackenzie possessed the smell of "freshly-baked bread" (16), something Rusty's grandmother would smell like. Unfortunately, Miss Mackenzie died in the winter season, the same year Rusty met

her. Their relationship did not last for a long time but their bond was so deep that even after her death, she still continued to live in Rusty's heart and memories.

Rusty spent a few days with his mother as his guardian was off to Bombay for some work. Even after so many years, Rusty still disliked his mother and there was no improvement in their relationship. He did not have any liking for his stepfather either, who went by the name 'Major Summerskill.' The Major had a firm belief that if Rusty indulged too much in books, he would end up as a dreamer. Hence, he took Rusty's books away. The Major was very different from Rusty's father as Mr. Bond (Rusty's father) was the one who introduced Rusty to books, whereas his stepfather took his books away. When the Major went out of town for a couple of days, Rusty quietly took some of his favorite books and hid them in the outhouse. Before leaving, Major Summerskill had ordered Puran, the gardener, to cover up an open well in the garden. But, Puran was reluctant to do so as the well was a home to a colony of pigeons. Moreover, the well was also a favorite spot of Mr. Bond, Rusty's deceased father, who used to sit next to the well to make drawings. The Major was fuming with anger when he realized that the job given to Puran was unfinished. On the pretext of checking the well, Puran made the Major bend his body and look into it. When the Major looked into the well, Puran pushed him in it. After that, the gardener covered the well with bricks. In a way, Rusty was also a partner in crime as he witnessed everything but did not tell anyone about it. After the death of Major Summerskill, Rusty's mother married a colonel.

After living with his mother for some days, Rusty went back to live with his guardians. Since the guardians had to travel frequently for business purposes, they decided to get Rusty enrolled in a boarding school. Rusty also felt that his guardians

wanted to get rid of him as they did not want to take care of a grown-up boy. Rusty joined Arundel, a boarding school in Paharganj. One day, while travelling from Dehra to Kalka via Ambala, he met a loving woman at the Ambala station. The woman generously invited him to a nearby restaurant to have some tea and snacks with her so that he doesn't have to spend time alone. After spending some time with her, Rusty warmed up to the woman. She asked him a lot of questions pertaining to his likes and dislikes, which made him feel important. But he could not fathom why a lonely woman, dressed in a plain white sari, would be interested in him. On reaching the platform, Rusty found out his classmate named Satish waiting there with his mother. To Satish and his mother, the stranger woman introduced herself as Rusty's mother. Rusty was a bit taken aback and before he could give any explanations, Satish's mother started talking about the potential dangers associated with travelling alone. At this point, the stranger woman interrupted and said that Rusty was capable of travelling alone. This reply gave Rusty a surge of self-esteem and he instantly forgave the stranger woman for the lie she had said. While they waited for the train to arrive, Satish's mother chattily told Rusty that he should not talk to strangers. But Rusty retorted that he liked talking to strangers, looking from Satish's mother to the stranger woman he had met.

The above instance shows certain characteristics of Rusty's personality. Even though he was quite young, he still had a strong sense of independence. He did not like being told what he was and wasn't capable of.

Even though Rusty did not gel well with his guardians, he never wanted to go away to a boarding school. The school never let him feel free. His independence was always valued by people, like his father and grandfather, who were important in his life. So, freedom always carried a high value for him. His friend, Daljeet, also

disliked the school. In order to live their lives as they always wanted to, they planned to run away from their school. They felt trapped and wanted to escape from the school in order to pursue their dreams. Daljeet's dream was to join his father's business in Kenya, but Rusty's dreams had changed. He now wanted to become a writer instead of a botanist which he stated when he was twelve years old.

An individual, in his adolescence, is known to be a dreamer. Every avenue in life seems interesting and everything seems possible and plausible. Rusty wanted to become a botanist for he loved nature and wanted to study more about plants, but his love for books turned out to be greater than his love for nature. Therefore, he changed his decision from becoming a botanist to becoming a writer.

A big decision, like running away from school, was taken by Rusty and Daljeet on the spur of the moment. Preparations regarding the same were made accordingly. The aim of the strategy was to reach Jamnagar, the place from where they hoped to sail in Rusty's uncle's ship to Africa. His uncle, Jim, was the captain of a ship, O.H. Iris, which plied between East Africa and India. Uncle Jim used to send letters to Rusty from all over the world, and from every place the ship would dock at. These letters gave birth to this desire of Rusty to travel the whole world. He wanted to experience the thrill and feeling of being able to understand everything that he had just read in books and in Uncle Jim's letters. He wanted to feel the independence that had gone missing from his life since the time he started living with his guardians. Rusty said that he was not running away from something, but running towards something.

After finally formulating a neat, but not so well thought out plan, Rusty and Daljeet decided to go ahead with the idea of running away, even though they were

aware of the fact that they might encounter problems on their way. Once the journey away from the school started, so did the thrilling adventures. After walking miles through the jungle, the duo finally reached the Raiwala railway station. From there, they took a train to the old Delhi railway station, moving one step closer towards their dreams and freedom. Even as they thought they were at a safe distance, trouble was right at their heels. On reaching Delhi, they caught sight of their mathematics teacher, Mr. Jain, who was sent to Delhi by the school authorities. Unfortunately, he noticed the boys among the people in the crowd. What followed after was a chase, highly powered by the adrenaline rush. The thought of losing the chase to fulfill their dreams pushed Rusty and Daljeet forward, away from the eyes of their teacher.

The next step was reaching Jaipur, which would take them another step forward towards freedom as well as the dockyard in Jamnagar. They befriended a truck driver, Gurnam Singh. He offered a free ride to Jaipur in his truck. Thrilled, they decided to take the ride. This shows that Rusty, like in the instance with the stranger woman at the Ambala station, voluntarily and quite easily trusted this stranger truck driver. Since his experience with the woman had been memorable, harmless, and reinforcing, Rusty believed that even this stranger driver would be the same. Unluckily, the city of Jaipur had other plans for them. They were very tired and were searching for a proper place to rest. When they were wandering about, they chanced upon the ruins of a hunting lodge. The aroma of food pulled them closer towards the lodge. When they noticed that there was chicken curry bubbling away on the stove, they couldn't control their hunger and dipped their fingers to have a taste of it. Before they could even savor the taste, three dacoits pounced on them and tied up and gagged them. The dacoits robbed Rusty and Daljeet not only of money but of all their belongings. Not left with a single penny, Rusty still hoped to reach Jamnagar

and fulfill all his desires and dreams. This further showed that Rusty was not ready to give up his dreams. His previous experiences had taught him that if one keeps his composure and tries to solve the problems, then the problems are anyhow solved. He had been through much bigger dangerous situations in the past like his escape from the Indian Ocean after the seaplane accident while returning from Java. Troubles could not stop him from pursuing his goal. This could be attributed to the fact that even in the past too, Rusty had been through many ups and downs in his life from which he had come out successfully and emerged as a winner. He knew that every bad phase in life somehow comes to an end.

But, this was not where the trouble ended. On reaching Jamnagar, Rusty and Daljeet decided to take a dip in a nearby stream. While they were swimming in the stream, some village children ran away with their clothes. Helpless and naked, they hid in a mango grove after being chased by the land owner and some stray dogs. But, luck decided to favor them when they noticed two railway workers taking off their clothes to take a dip in the same stream. To cover their modesty, they ran away with the clothes of the railway workers who had gone for swimming. With just an hour at hand, they decided to reach the harbor in a pony cart but as fate had already decided, the ship sailed just minutes before they arrived. Rusty was heartbroken as his dreams were shattered, but Daljeet had still not lost hope. He said that he would keep dreaming till his dreams come true and no one could stop him from that. As an adolescent, Rusty's friend plays a very important part in his life. Daljeet's optimism changed Rusty's mind instantly.

After the whole running away fiasco, the school expelled Rusty but it was a new beginning for him- a new school, a new life, and new people. As a sixteen year



old, he was very different from the regular boys in his new school. He now studied at another boarding school, Bishop Cotton's, in Simla. He spent all his time reading books. He thought he was developing into a premature adult.

Rusty noticed a new boy in his class who seemed to be very similar to him. His name was Omar, another premature adult. Both Rusty and Omar were in their school's hockey team and with the passage of time, they became good friends. During those days, Rusty was making his first attempt at writing. It was a rough draft of what he called *Nine Months*, indicating a whole term in school. To his dismay, his housemaster found it. It was torn into bits and pieces by him as Rusty had lampooned some of his teachers in it. Nonetheless, Rusty vowed not to stop writing due to this incident. This shows Rusty's strong willpower which again was an outcome of his past experiences in life that taught him to persevere and work harder to achieve what he desired and change his existence. Even though he lost all that he wrote, he was positive that he would pen down something similar yet again.

But his positivism came to a standstill very soon. Due to the partition of India and Pakistan, riots flared up across northern India. However, that did not falter the relationship and friendship between Rusty and Omar. One fine day, when they were exploring places around the school campus, they discovered a tunnel in an old, disused drainage system. Inside this tunnel, Rusty and Omar would spend hours together. Here, the tunnel is symbolical. It served as an escape from the harsh realities and the grim horrors of partition.

When the partitioning of India took place in 1947, the children who belonged to Pakistan and were studying at Bishop Cotton's were sent back. It was an emotional parting for Rusty. They had grown very close to each other, so the two decided that

they would meet again in the future. Due to the ongoing war between India and Pakistan, a Pakistani plane which was crossing Ambala was shot down in a bombing raid. All the passengers, including Omar, lost their lives. Having lost every single person Rusty comes close to, he shut himself off from the world and the people. He became a recluse.

After finishing his schooling, seventeen years old Rusty suffered living with his guardian. Mrs. Harrison had been living in England for about a year, but Mr. Harrison was not someone who would go back to England leaving India behind. Due to the feeling of racial superiority, Mr. Harrison failed miserably to influence Rusty's behavior and personality. Only a few Europeans stayed on after independence in India, and Mr. Harrison took pride in that. Rusty found such behavior unnecessary, but he never voiced his opinions. He was scared of his guardian and this fear made him always obey his orders. This behavior was not out of respect, but because of Mr. Harrison's dominating persona.

As Rusty never interacted much with his guardian, he never really had much to say. He made himself busy by walking aimlessly around Dehra. He enjoyed tramping as he could feel, think, and enjoy the weather, nature, and the silence, all by himself. But even though he loved these walks, he felt terribly lonely. He always yearned for a companion, be it from a friendly or a romantic relation. All his life he had struggled with a lot of aspects, starting from family to his own identity. These walks in the lap of nature helped him in constructing numerous impressions about life and provided opportunities to know him better. One such day, while walking homewards in the evening, a Sikh teenager, whose name was Somi, offered Rusty a

ride home. When Somi proposed friendship, Rusty declined his generous offer. Rusty had become such a recluse that he forgot how to interact with people.

However, life threw him an opportunity to come out of his own shadows. Mr. Harrison had to leave for Delhi for a couple of days due to business reasons. As seen in the previous incidents in the novel, Rusty felt like a free bird in his guardian's absence. Years ago, Rusty had befriended an Indian girl, Koki, without telling his guardian. This time, too, he decided to finally disobey his guardian and visit the 'bazaar.' Till now, Rusty's life had been dull in Mr. Harrison's house and so, he thought that it was the perfect time for him to search for new pleasures in life. It came in the form of the 'bazaar.' Due to the strict European upbringing of Rusty by his guardian, he had never been to the 'bazaar.' Rusty operated within the sphere of European community. The 'bazaar' was a forbidden place for him. According to Rusty, the 'bazaar' symbolized real India. It was what stands for the real India, a place which was away from the confines of the European community. Finally, he was going to explore that place, something he had always wanted to do since the age of twelve. He went to the 'bazaar,' defying the laws of his community and the orders of his guardian. His rebellious streak shows its true colors in this instance once again. On reaching the 'bazaar,' he met Somi again. Somi introduced Rusty to his friends, Ranbir and Suri. Here, it is seen that Rusty was opening up and coming out of his reclusiveness. Due to the environment provided by his guardian at home, he had never been able to explore the real India. Somi introduced Rusty to the real India by treating him with *chaat*. For the first time in his life, because of Somi and his friends, Rusty was savoring this experience.

Rusty was attracted to the warm and hospitable nature of Somi and his friends. This was Rusty's first step towards accepting Indian life and its people and this can be called the biggest leap and the turning point of his life. But, things fall apart when Mr. Harrison returned from his business trip. Rusty felt weak and frightened. He did not want his guardian to find out about him going to the 'bazaar' and his indulgence in the Indian street food, but Mr. Harrison was already informed about it by the neighbors.

Rusty was beaten up black and blue with Malacca cane, the one that he was so scared of and detested. The feeling of being punished seemed unjust to Rusty. He did not deserve the beating and Mr. Harrison did it only to satisfy his ego and prove himself stronger and Rusty weaker. Rusty clearly knew that this behavior of his guardian was wrong. A feeling of revolt against his tyrannical guardian was taking shape. Retaliation started bubbling within him and he started this revolt by continuously breaking social codes.

Rusty decided to play 'Holi' with Ranbir. At first, on being invited, he did not consider it seriously, but after the unfair behavior shown towards him by Mr. Harrison, he decided to put his foot down. He played 'Holi' with Ranbir with full enthusiasm. His repressed emotions find an outlet in this incident and he laughs, runs, plays, pranks, and feels united with people. This incident of playing 'Holi' signified the breaking away of Rusty from the colonial restraints and can be considered as another expression of defiance caused due to continuous punishment. This festival is instrumental in overcoming class and caste prejudices, something Rusty had never believed in. This tolerance towards everything intolerant to his guardian and the other

acquaintances shows his capability of choosing right over wrong and the righteousness in his character. His maturity shines through this incident.

Painted in color from head to toe, Rusty was very well aware of the consequences he was about to face, but surprisingly, he wasn't scared. He was enjoying this newfound strength and he wasn't going to let go of that. He had faced serious consequences in the past for breaking the rules, enjoying life, letting loose his innermost instincts, and overcoming the prejudices. It seems that he was unaffected of the consequences that were supposed to follow when he returned home now. Just as he had predicted, Mr. Harrison was fuming with anger. As punishment for not obeying his orders, he started hitting Rusty with the cane yet again. Till now, Rusty had kept things bottled up inside. With anger and contempt burning within him, he had his first and only outburst. With his strong hands, he thrashed and beat up his guardian, something he had only dreamt of in his happiest dreams. This incident shows that he was discovering himself as a person, identifying his traits and qualities which he never knew existed in him.

He saw an escape from this tyranny and made a dash for it. He ran away from his guardian's house. He had tasted freedom quite a number of times in the past couple of days and he loved the way it tasted. His only hope was Somi, who had promised to meet him the next day in the 'bazaar.' With no place to go in the night, he slept on the bench in the *maidan*. He wanted to belong somewhere. For all his life, he never had a single place called home. Now, when he is seventeen years old, he wanted to do all the things he had lost out on. He broke all the social and racial barriers to settle down the dilemma of belongingness. It was easy for him to break all the barriers in life because his life had provided ample of opportunities for that.

Change was something that had come to his life very often and very sharply, strongly, and very ruthlessly sometimes. He had spent wonderful time with many people in the past and unfortunately, these wonderful times had often been short-lived.

The experiences he had in the past couple of days transformed him into a new leaf. He tasted freedom, madness, selfless friendship, and violence and each one of these emotions was new to him. He wanted to hold on to these feelings and never let them go. As promised, Somi came the next morning and took him to his house. He introduced Rusty to the Indian life. Somi's family made Rusty feel at home. With them, Rusty felt like family, the family he never had and that moved him. Soon, Rusty was seen frequenting the 'bazaar,' relishing the street food and living the Indian life. His friendship with Somi and Ranbir gave a new lease of life to him. It helped in shaping his character and made him a better person. He came out of his introvert shell and became people-friendly. He started relating to people different from himself and acquired humanity.

The only thing that was missing from his life was his own identity. He longed for financial independence. Finally, he was employed as a tutor for Kishen Kapoor, a spoilt rich child. Mr. Kapoor was looking for an English teacher and Rusty was perfect for the job. Hence, he was employed as a tutor in the house of Kapoors. But his financial independence did not come that soon. Instead of money or a fixed salary, he was given free food and accommodation in their house. He felt happy as he finally had a place to stay, even though he felt helpless and lonely without Somi. But his biggest dream, of having a room of his own, came true that day. Towards the end of the novel, we find Rusty falling in love with Mrs. Meena Kapoor, mother of Kishen. He would think about Mrs. Kapoor time and again, and soon he was in love with her,

an emotion he was experiencing for the first time for a stranger. Rusty is now standing at the embankment of adulthood.

The third novel, *Rusty and the Leopard*, which is dedicated entirely to the circumstances and situations which Rusty continues to encounter, picks up from where the second novel ends. Rusty is now stepping into manhood. This novel is full of introspections and incidents.

Rusty was now employed as an English tutor for Kishen Kapoor, son of a very wealthy man, Mr. Kapoor. The Kapoors did not offer him any fixed income, but provided him lodging and food, something Rusty needed more than financial independence. Finally, he was given a room on the roof, but he wanted more than just a room. He wanted to be loved and cared by someone. He found the prospect of this love in Kishen's mother, Mrs. Meena Kapoor. Rusty was dazzled and completely mesmerized by Meena's politeness, charisma, and beauty. Everything, from her deep brown eyes to her simple two strap slippers, captivated him. Rusty could never find the happiness and contentment that an individual looks for in his life. After everything he had been through, the Kapoors seemed godsend to him. In their house, he eventually found the solace and happiness he was looking for.

The Kapoors were an odd bunch of people, completely opposite to each other. Mrs. Kapoor was a poised and sophisticated woman who had immense patience and was very cultured. Mr. Kapoor, on the other hand, was a drunkard and a little mentally disturbed too. He was a perfect example of 'riches to rags.' It is clearly evident that Meena was not happy and satisfied with her drunkard husband. She appeared to be a lady who had surrendered herself to her present life in which she found no meaning. Even though the three members were different from one another,

Rusty received love and respect equally from them, for each one of them had a good heart. With the passage of time, a strong bond developed between Rusty and Kishen. To Rusty, Kishen was more like a brother who he wanted to take care of and protect.

During one of his walks, Rusty discovered a pool in the forest. On discovering this pool, Rusty, Somi, Ranbir, and Kishen started spending most of their time wrestling and buffalo riding at this new spot. This pool was a meeting point for them and all the planning regarding many adventurous activities was carried out at this place. One of the characteristics of Rusty's personality was his explorative nature. He had always explored hidden places and such explorations always resulted in some surprises.

Rusty, Somi, and Kishen planned a trip to the Pindari Glacier and it was Rusty's love for nature and adventure that made him look forward to this trip. The young men took a bus to Kapkote, the starting point of their journey. At Kapkote, they met a young boy, Bisnu, who accompanied them, acting as their guide as he knew the mountains very well. They walked miles before reaching the glacier. On reaching the glacier, they saw that the sight was magnificent. They were completely awestruck and taken aback by its beauty. Without Bisnu's guidance, this trek wouldn't have been possible.

Owing to his childhood experiences, Rusty was of a very accommodating nature. For instance, he was initially reluctant to bathe at the water tank. He thought it to be a bit bizarre to bathe with other strangers, but now he had become used to the people at the tank. With time, he had accepted Indian life and people wholeheartedly. Here, the flexibility of Rusty's character is visible. He was always willing to change and accept new ways of life. This may definitely be attributed to the fact that he had seen many drastic changes in his life. This had made him less apprehensive of new



people, new places, new experiences of life, and new changes in circumstances. Therefore, it was rather easy for him to accept the new Indian life and people.

Meena planned a picnic for the whole family. Rusty was delighted to go with her. It can be said that this was the happiest period of his life. He had the Kapoors, who liked him for the person he was. There was Somi, who was his closest friend and then there was Meena, who was the person Rusty loved with all his heart and wanted to spend the rest of his life with. The trauma through which Rusty had gone through at his guardian's place was mitigated to some extent in the company of friends like Somi, Kishen, and others. Rusty's attraction towards Meena increased boundlessly. It was in the jungle that he kissed her for the first time and she reciprocated. This incident depicts not the physical union, but the union of two souls desperately searching peace in love. As Meena G. Khorana remarks:

Mrs. Kapoor responds to his adoration at first with motherly affection and then, perhaps because of her frustrated and unhappy life with her alcoholic husband, she is flattered by Rusty's attention and kiss. They are kindred souls: Rusty feels protective toward Mrs. Kapoor because, like her, he was once trapped in a loveless relationship. She is abused emotionally and psychologically by her husband's drunkenness and sense of failure, just as Rusty was abused physically and mentally by Mr. Harrison. Rusty wants to give her the love and attention that she deserves, and that he was so sadly denied by his guardian. (74)

A chance meeting between Mr. Harrison and Rusty took place, but Rusty was a transformed person now. He was not the same feeble, meek, and lonely boy who dreaded Mr. Harrison. He greeted him with confidence. As Rusty matured, he noticed

that there were certain changes which were taking place in him physically as well. A noticeable change in his physique could be seen.

Soon, Mr. and Mrs. Kapoor had to go to Delhi for a whole month for some business work. Meena going away meant her leaving behind a lovelorn Rusty. It was very obvious that Rusty felt sad and disappointed. He missed her terribly and a void was created in his life, though temporarily, by her absence. It was very difficult for Rusty to cope up with his growing love as well as his growing sadness. Kishen was left in the care of Rusty. It became quite apparent that Rusty was perceived as a responsible and sensible person capable of taking responsibilities. Meena trusted Rusty and before leaving, she gave him money for running the house and taking care of Kishen though he did not like taking up this responsibility one bit.

The realization of this fact by Rusty that he disliked taking responsibility can be further attributed to his past experiences. In his past life, wherever and whoever he had spent his time with, he had been the only child in the environment. So, he never got any opportunity to take care of someone else. Therefore, he felt uncomfortable when faced with such a situation, but when needed, it can be seen that he was perfectly capable of taking up such responsibility. This can be further attributed to two facts. Firstly, for the major part of his life, he was left to himself and this resulted in the development of a sense of independence which helped him in taking decisions pertaining to day-to-day life. So, he could take such decisions for others as well for whom he was responsible. Secondly, with whosoever he had lived in his life, most of the people had been considerate towards him and had always taken care of his needs. Consequently, this behavior of others instilled in him the value of responsibility.

The weather played havoc the same night the Kapoors left for Delhi. Rusty did not feel safe. Every feeling or thought that he had was fuelled by nature. Nature was taking its own course to tell him to be prepared for the bad which was to happen. He was scared that the storm might be a way of notifying him that something bad was going to happen. The next morning, Rusty received a telegram from an aunt of Kishen. On reading the telegram, his life came to a standstill and his face whitened with sadness and fear. The telegram notified Rusty and Kishen that an accident had taken place and Mrs. Kapoor had died. Mr. Kapoor survived with minor injuries. The news shattered both Kishen and Rusty equally. Since Kishen could not live alone and his father was incapable of taking care of him, Kishen's aunt took him away with her to Hardwar. When the time came for Kishen to leave, he didn't want to go without Rusty. Rusty, too, had become immensely fond of him.

Rusty was alone yet again in his life. Each and every person he was close to and loved ended up leaving him. Fate's cruel hands took Meena away from him, plunging his life into the darkness yet again, from which he had just emerged. After his father's death, the death of Meena left a huge impact on Rusty's mind. Day and night, he pondered over the unimportance of life.

Somi told Rusty that he would be going to Amritsar for a few months. This news shattered Rusty and a feeling of despair enveloped him. Everyone was leaving him. All his friends had left him; first Ranbir, then Suri and Kishen, and now Somi would leave too. Rusty was deeply wounded. He felt neglected and let down. He felt as though everyone was deserting him. He found himself in the same situation as he was in his guardian's house. He expressed his desire to go to England. He expressed his feelings to Somi and said that he didn't have roots anywhere.

Rusty could not handle the grief and felt miserable. In order to forget his miseries, Rusty drank alcohol for the first time. Rusty had his first brush with a vice. Troubled by the events that had taken place in his life recently, he pushed himself over the edge to simply forget the agony and pain his mind was going through. Following Mr. Kapoor's footsteps, Rusty also indulged in drinking. His purpose was to lose touch with sanity and to shut the world out. But the next morning, when he regained his senses, he cursed himself for drinking and making a fool of himself.

Rusty spent most of the time in his room feeling trapped. He felt lonely and bored. He waited for something to happen which would snap him back to reality. The monsoon arrived, but it brought momentary relief and invigorated him. Rusty turned eighteen. He finally decided to leave Dehra as he was fed up of his boring life. He decided to go to Delhi to ask for assistance from the High Commission of United Kingdom concerning his passage from India to England. Before going to Delhi, he decided to make a stopover in Hardwar to meet Kishen. He didn't tell anyone of his departure and left the door unclosed. He went to Hardwar to meet Kishen, but to his surprise, he found out that Kishen had left his aunt's house to become a thief. The house was now inhabited by Mr. Kapoor and his new wife. Finally, when he met Kishen near the Ganges, he observed that he had become weak and shabby. Kishen asked Rusty to join hands with him, but he refused. Finally, both decided to return to Dehra, dashing out all the hopes of going to England. Rusty felt secure and happy to be with Kishen again. This brought some order back to his life. Dehra might again become meaningful and reinforcing to him. On their way to Dehra, at the Raiwala railway station, Rusty shared a drink with a stranger. We find that Rusty had always mingled easily with the strangers.

On reaching Dehra, they found that their room was rented out to some new tenant. With no place to go and live, Rusty and Kishen ended up sleeping in the *maidan*. Rusty recollected his past experience of running away from his guardian's place and sleeping in the *maidan*. They were reduced to a state of poverty, with no place to live in and surviving on meager meals. On the outskirts of Dehra, Rusty found an abandoned, old church of St. Paul. Since they had no accommodation whatsoever, Rusty and Kishen decided to make this old church their temporary lodging. Rusty hated to see people suffer lonely deaths. This can be attributed to the fact that he himself suffered from the death of people dearest to him.

As promised, Rusty and Kishen paid a visit to Somi's mother. There, they had a sumptuous meal after a long time. Somi's mother also forced Rusty to stay with her, but he refused as he wanted to be independent. He was now strong-willed to carve a niche for himself and finally build his own personal identity.

While wandering in the hills, Rusty saw a house which belonged to an Englishman, Mr. Pettigrew. Mr. Pettigrew knew Rusty's father quite well. He told Rusty about an aunt who lived in the hills, near a village in Garhwal. As per the information given by Mr. Pettigrew, Rusty's father stayed with this aunt before he died and had left something valuable for Rusty. This news made Rusty restless and he was anxious to meet her.

As the story progresses, we witness Rusty's several encounters with the strangers. Rusty met a roadside vendor, Devinder, who was also homeless like him. Rusty invited Devinder to stay with him. This is another instance of his openness with strangers. These vagrants (Rusty, Kishen, and Devinder) had made a family of their own which was more loving and caring than the biological families. Such incidents

further brought about a positive change in Rusty's attitude towards the strangers. Finally, Rusty and Kishen had to part ways. As Kishen had been wandering aimlessly all this while, Mrs. Bhushan (an old family friend of the Kapoors) took him away to her house.

As Rusty moved on in life, he met new friends and acquaintances. Rusty met Sudheer, a crook, who worked for the Seth and was involved in many shady transactions. Before Rusty's departure to meet his aunt in Garhwal, Devinder gave him some money. Even though Rusty's friends were not from well-to-do families, they were still generous, kind, and helpful. Rusty's openness with strangers was primarily because of the fact that he always met genuine people who never cheated. As the train ran through the tunnel, Rusty indulged in reminiscence. He remembered that as a boy, he had cycled all the way out of town to watch the steam engine pass through the tunnel.

Raghu, the watchman of the tunnel, told Rusty about the leopard often seen near the tunnel. One evening, when Raghu was inspecting the tunnel minutes before the arrival of the train, he found a leopard in the tunnel. But Raghu and Rusty managed to drive it away saving its life. He recollected another experience of his encounter with another leopard. He had gone to Mussoorie with his father. One day, while walking into the forest, he was disturbed to see hunters looking for a leopard to have its skin. He was strictly against exploiting wild animals in the name of hunting or money. Meanwhile, the leopard had become fully conscious of Rusty's presence in the forest because of his frequent visits. His presence never perturbed the inhabitants of the forest. He had developed an understanding with them. But soon afterwards, he found out that the hunters had killed that leopard. Rusty felt bad because the trust he

had developed between the animals and humans was broken by the hunters (his own race).

During his childhood, Rusty had enough opportunities for interacting with all types of animals, including the wild ones, and he had always observed that such interaction was mostly not dangerous. So, he had developed a positive attitude towards the animals. Even his friendly and dauntless attitude towards the leopard was a result of such interactions. The same happened with the leopard also. It had the opportunity to interact with Rusty and that did not result in any dangerous situation for any of them.

Sudheer acquired some information about Rusty's aunt. They went to meet her together. On being asked, the aunt told Rusty that his father had not left anything for him except a few books. His aunt was very hospitable and friendly. She asked them to stay with her as both of them were alone and lonely, but Rusty refused as he didn't want to die like a hermit. Having left the aunt's house, Rusty and Sudheer made their way towards Rishikesh. Rusty told Sudheer that he wanted to give up the life of vagrancy because he was tired of aimless wandering. Sudheer was upset and didn't want to part ways as he had grown rather accustomed to being around Rusty. Even Rusty had developed a liking for Sudheer, since the vacuum created by Kishen's departure was filled by Sudheer. Therefore, we see that each trip or incident taught Rusty something about life and helped him in taking decisions. Rusty went back to Dehra. Devinder told Rusty to start earning and do something productive in life.

Rusty met Mr. Pettigrew. While going through Rusty's books, Mr. Pettigrew found out that the book, *Alice in Wonderland*, was a first edition book and could fetch

Rusty a good amount because the booksellers in England and America used to collect rare works of literature. Mr. Pettigrew took the responsibility of arranging its sale. Rusty didn't want to sell off the book as it formed a very important and perhaps the only part of the legacy his father had left behind, but the money he would get would give him some financial freedom and he would be able to go to London as he wished. Rusty knew the importance of money in one's life, but at the same time, he was not obsessed with it. Mr. Pettigrew suggested Rusty to leave India if he desired to become a writer as gaining popularity in India would have been difficult.

Rusty was finally prepared to go to London. His heart lay in India, but in order to progress, he had to leave India. He was ready to face new challenges. With positivity and optimism, Rusty embarked on a new journey with hopes of materializing his dreams of becoming a writer into reality.

*Rusty Goes to London* is the fourth novel. Rusty goes to London in order to accomplish his dreams of becoming a writer. After moving to England, he stayed at his aunt's house in Jersey for initial years and then in rented lodgings in London. While he was in London, he had myriad adventures. There, he fell in love with a Vietnamese girl, Vu-Phuong, who did not return his advances and ultimately left him. This made him very desolate and he started feeling that women were infidels. After staying there for three years, he realized that he yearned to return to India. He wanted to make India his permanent home. Finally, he returned to Dehra and settled into his new role as an author.

The idea of becoming a writer definitely had its origin in Rusty's childhood experiences. One can trace the influence of the early environment on his personality. His father, who loved reading books and revered writers, had reinforced similar



behavior in Rusty. Therefore, Rusty always had a special attraction towards books and a high regard for authors.

*Rusty Comes Home* is the fifth and concluding volume of the Rusty series. Rusty moved out of Dehra to give a lift to his writing career. Even though he had his own reasons for moving to Delhi, he could never really love the city as his heart had already been captured by the hills of north India. After staying for two years in Delhi, he moved to a new city, Shahganj. After exploring Delhi, Dehra, and Shahganj, he finally settled down in Mussoorie making a living as a celebrated writer.

This is how the Rusty series, penned by the great author Ruskin Bond, about the life and times of Rusty, ends. This series of novels depict, in a very graphic manner, how a small boy grows up under various influences and how his personality gets shaped by a range of varied influences. We witness how a small boy, who is quite often at the receiving end of the ways of the world and who is often uprooted from whatever he considers is his root, tries to define himself and find meaning of his existence and ultimately finds it.

Maslow and Rogers, the two pioneers of humanistic psychology, have put a lot of emphasis on the importance of a fully functioning person. According to well-known humanists, the sole aim of everyone's life journey is to become the best version of their own selves and reach a state which is commonly termed as self-actualization. This state refers to the highest potential a person can reach. That potential can be material, physical, emotional, social, or spiritual. It solely depends on the path or the course an individual takes in his life. Even though every path can be different as every life and the individual experiences are different, the underlying mechanism remains the same, which is to achieve self-actualization.

Maslow and Rogers, in their own ways and theories, have stated out the concept of self-actualization and ways to achieve it. For Maslow, there are levels and hierarchies of needs that need to be fulfilled before reaching the optimal state. The levels indicate a state of fulfillment in a person leading him to seek higher goals in life and becoming more physically and psychologically healthy. Rogers, on the other hand, puts a lot of emphasis on the environmental situations influencing the ability to become a fully functioning person. According to Rogers, a person needs to be psychologically healthy in order to reach the state of self-actualization. In order to achieve that, the environment of the person needs to be completely trustworthy and accepting for the individual. For any reason, if the subjects in the environment fail to do so, an incongruence of thoughts and emotions occurs, often not understood by the person. That incongruence hinders the person's ability to reach self-actualization.

Even though there are various ways in which the capacity to reach self-actualization can be hindered, it can never be stopped. According to humanistic psychologists, the need to reach self-actualization is innate and cannot die. In fact, all the personalities and individuals we encounter in our daily lives are walking the same path of learning, growing, and reaching self-actualization. Only the degree of their growth varies.

The character, Rusty, is the epitome of what humanists are trying to establish, that every individual's innate nature is to grow. Over the years, in Rusty's life, it can be seen how his inclination has always been towards growing and achieving mental and physical freedom. Several instances can be found in which Rusty is closely influenced by his environment and develops traits that correspond to his life experiences. Everything related to Rusty, be it the environment, his family relations, friends, or life experiences, contributes to his becoming an adult that he is.

The character of Rusty goes through a series of incidents that alter and change his life and personal traits. The personality of the protagonist is not stable throughout the series and we witness its constant need to grow. The Rusty series, penned by Ruskin Bond, has left readers in awe and amazement. This series depicts a simple boy's story set against a backdrop of pre-independence era in India. Rusty's journey shows life in its raw form where the protagonist ultimately walks towards self-actualization. Though there are several ups and downs in his life, the personality of Rusty finally blossoms at the end.

The first part of the first novel, *Rusty: The Boy from the Hills*, shows Rusty's life in the foothills of Dehra where he lives with his grandparents. At an early age of four, Rusty witnessed his parents' separation, but he was not much devastated and shattered as the loss was compensated by the love showered upon him by his grandparents. The first part of the novel explores Rusty's bond with his grandfather and also shows how wisdom imparted by him helped Rusty in developing strong personality traits that stuck with him till the end.

Rusty grew up in the shadow of his grandparents since his parents separated when he was quite young. He was not loved and received well by his mother and so, he preferred staying with his grandparents. He felt welcomed and accepted in the shadow of his grandparents and that marked the development of first set of traits in Rusty. When Rusty showed his inclination to live with his grandparents rather than with his mother, he can be seen fulfilling his first set of needs in the order of the hierarchy mentioned in Maslow's theory. Maslow's hierarchy of needs describes the basic stages of human needs starting from physiological needs to self-actualization needs. Rusty had a loving, warm, and secure relationship with his grandparents. It is evident that Rusty's basic physiological needs were fulfilled by his grandparents as he

had a place to stay, family to share food with, and a safe environment to grow in. When a person's basic physiological needs are fulfilled, the person seeks higher needs. Those higher needs help a person to feel more fulfilled in life. During his childhood, Rusty received unconditional love from his grandfather that helped him become confident and fulfilled at that stage in his life.

During Rusty's childhood, his grandfather introduced him to nature which provided him much needed warmth and care, especially after the separation of his parents. Rusty grew closer to the idea of attending to plants and animals. As the basic physiological needs of Rusty were fulfilled, he was able to seek higher dimensions of needs because of his grandparents. The next need to follow in the hierarchy was the need for safety. One needs to feel physically and mentally safe in order to climb the ladder of hierarchy of needs. Rusty was provided a safe and a secure environment by his grandparents. There are a few instances in the novel where Rusty can be seen mentioning his feeling of security when surrounded by his father and grandfather. This shows a healthy psychological mechanism and a state of fulfillment in his life when he didn't perceive any danger in the environment and felt rather safe and secure. Rusty felt the same kind of safety when he was around his father. He also developed the feelings of safety and security while observing his grandfather attending to strange pets in the house. Because of his grandfather, Rusty grew in an environment that would have generally scared any child. He felt at peace with animals like snakes, monkeys, and even lion cubs around him. The idea of fear never entered into his mind because of the unshakeable faith he had in his grandfather. With him, he learned the art of being a confident child who could wander in nature and play with ferocious animals without any hint of fear.

From a young age, the sense of confidence, security, and mental freedom was engraved in Rusty's mind. Rusty achieved mental freedom from the feelings he experienced whenever he went to wander in nature. So, the environment he surrounded himself with gave him the opportunity to grow and fulfill the need of mental freedom. Rusty's grandfather helped him to learn more about flora and fauna and how one could take care of the animals, thus providing him with the space to learn, grow, and fulfill his curiosity. The impact of grandfather's upbringing in making his grandson a strong, secure, and confident child is clearly noticeable. The next need in order after safety need is the need for belongingness in the hierarchy of needs. Rusty witnessed the separation of his parents during his childhood and was quite affected by it. He was never close to his mother and, therefore, preferred to live with his grandparents. Even though Rusty did not receive the love of his parents (especially his mother's) that everybody deserves, he still received his share of belongingness with his grandparents, nature, and animals. He always felt loved and secure around his grandparents and nature, and this helped him to seek higher-order needs in his life. Rusty, at a young age, became a seeker- a seeker of nature, learning, and solitude. He felt safe and secure and had a high respect for nature. He became a very sensitive child; firstly, because of his love for nature, animals, and his grandparents, and secondly, because of witnessing his parents' separation at a young age. He was sensitive in the sense that he understood the emotions, feelings, and sentiments of people and animals around him. He was conscious of his own thought process and the learnings nature had to offer him. This level of maturity and understanding at a young age comes when a person's basic levels of needs are fulfilled and a person can use that space to seek higher and more transcending needs. In Rusty's case, it is witnessed that the maturity comes from an unconditional loving

environment and support from his grandparents, thereby making the environment of the protagonist an important element in shaping his personality. It can be evidently seen in Rusty's development how his basic needs were fulfilled so that he could rise higher in life and fulfill his need for self-actualization by learning as much as he could from his grandfather and nature. It can be clearly understood why Rusty developed into a secure child walking the path of experiencing and fulfilling higher needs that would lead him to self-actualization. One finds his physiological needs completely fulfilled. Since his childhood, he experienced safety, love, security, and an unconditional acceptance from his grandparents that established self-esteem in him.

Rogers' theory also supports this idea. Rogers explains the importance of unconditional love and positive regard for the development of a fully functioning individual. Rusty's childhood was filled with love and acceptance from his grandparents and father. He saw how his grandfather accepted and loved the nature and animals around and also taught him how to do the same. The grandfather was highly influential in making Rusty walk in the direction of becoming a fully functioning person. Rusty learned how to feel secure and safe because of the positive unconditional regard his grandparents provided. The positive environment allows an individual to grow and foster. Rusty was a curious child who asked a lot of questions which were very patiently answered by his grandparents. This bond shows how accepted Rusty felt in that environment and thus, his image of 'self' and 'ideal self' was aligned. When a person's image of the self is aligned with the ideal self, the person becomes a fully functioning one. Rusty had the same experience while living with his grandparents. Because of the acceptance shown towards him by his grandfather, he developed into a mentally healthy child at a young age in spite of witnessing the separation of his parents and the absence of his mother. Rogers has

always emphasized on the power the environment has on an individual, and this is quite evident in Rusty's case. He appears to be a fully functioning individual in whom a sense of security instilled stays for a long time and helps him in his future endeavors. In the first part of the novel, the readers are given a chance to peek into the healthy relationship of Rusty and his grandfather. This had a huge impact on Rusty's life and it shaped him into becoming a secure, confident, and a mentally healthy child.

The next part of the novel explores Rusty's relationship with his father, which was quite similar to the relationship he shared with his grandfather. Even though Rusty lived away from his father, he still had immense respect and love for him as his father always tried to treat him in the best possible manner and provided him the most favorable environment. In the novel, it is mentioned that Rusty's father treated him more like a friend and less like a son. His father was very open-minded who fulfilled all of Rusty's intellectual cravings. When Rusty was considered an equal and given respect by his father, his self-esteem grew. This development of self-esteem in Rusty progressed towards the fourth stage of hierarchy of needs. Both the father and the grandfather had an important contribution in establishing Rusty's self-esteem. In the shadow of his father, Rusty's intellectual cravings were fulfilled. His endless questions about the world around him were patiently and joyously dealt with by his father. The strong persona of the father influenced Rusty to such an extent that even when faced with life-threatening situations, he would maintain his calm. Such maturity and calmness at a tender age shows strong personality traits and a positive mental health. The unconditional positive regard provided by Rusty's father and grandfather fostered his sense of self and contributed to the development of a fully functioning personality.

In the next stage of his life, he witnesses the unexpected demise of his father and grandfather. In such a stressful situation in his life, Rusty feels the lack of paternal love. He was immensely affected by the untimely demise of the two most influential persons in his life. In the wake of these events, he receded to stage two and three of hierarchy of needs. Rusty found it extremely hard to cope with these deaths and could feel the lack of affection in his life when he moved in with his mother and stepfather. He felt alone and not understood by people around him. In such a situation, he spent more and more time in natural surroundings in order to find solace. The readers witness that Rusty's needs change from the fifth stage of self-actualization to second and third stage where he feels the need for security and belongingness. He seeks these needs in nature and detaches himself from the outside world which was unable to fulfill his needs anymore. For a little while, he stays fixated in the second and third stage as the current need of the personality becomes the need for affection and not the need for learning and growing that was formerly present in the protagonist. Nature becomes his parent, supporter, and love and he felt relaxed and at peace with himself.

Rusty had a strong bond with his father and was deeply attached to him. After the untimely demise of his father and grandfather, he lived with his grandmother. Even though he was just an eleven year old boy, he had developed some strong positive personality traits. Even when his grandmother did not appreciate some of his habits, he would still feel mature enough to take decisions for himself. The lack of belongingness and friendship in Rusty's life led him to be friends with Ramu, the decision which his grandmother didn't like at all. Rusty, in spite of the disapproval, went on to become friends with Ramu and took bold steps like learning how to swim and also learning more about the Hindu culture. Rusty can be seen regaining his self-



esteem and confidence, something that was imparted to him by his father and grandfather. The strength and development of new traits in Rusty are quite evident. From being a sensitive boy, Rusty is now developing into a mature teenager who is capable of thinking and taking decisions for himself. Being friends with Ramu helped Rusty to get through the second and third stage of hierarchy of needs, bringing him back to the path of learning and achieving self-actualization. The friendship with Ramu also helped in building Rusty's self-esteem as it was a decision he solely made for himself thereby fostering his ideas of mental freedom and security. According to Rogers' theory, Rusty was now able to understand the importance of external and internal experiences thereby understanding the phenomenal and perceptual field. He became capable of thinking for himself, handling his emotions, and discovering ways to bring solace in life. All these traits contribute to a healthy functioning mechanism and Rusty was again on the road to fulfill higher needs while understanding the depth of experiences and the self.

In the novel, Rusty can be seen possessing certain characteristics. The first characteristic is his curiosity and wanderlust for nature. Rusty liked to take long walks in the lap of nature and quench his thirst for knowledge. His father and grandparents would patiently answer his innumerable questions. As a child, one could see that Rusty was very expressive and conscious of his feelings and emotions. He can be seen expressing his feelings of disliking towards his mother, his love for his grandmother's food, his annoyance towards his relatives like Uncle Ken, and his avoidance towards Ayah's superstitious beliefs. The clarity of thoughts and the consciousness of emotions arise in a person when he is psychologically and mentally healthy. When a person has a positive self-regard and a positive self-image, he has the tendency to have a clear mindset and strong personal preferences. When a person's

self-worth is high, he is able and capable of making judgments, opinions, and stays conscious of the thoughts occurring in the mind. According to Rogers' theory, Rusty had developed into a strong personality during his childhood owing to the courtesy of his grandparents and father.

Rusty's childhood was filled with love and laughter, nature and learning, safety and security, and a loving environment. All these parameters contribute to a healthy psychological functioning of a person. If the situation had continued in the same way until his adulthood, Rusty might have developed into a fully mature person very soon. Taking into consideration the immense support provided by people around Rusty, it can be said that the environment is another important building block of personality. But the untimely death of his grandmother left him shattered again and his life shifted from being surrounded by a loving and caring family to being in uncertain circumstances. This marks the end of the first novel of the Rusty series by Ruskin Bond.

The second novel, *Rusty Runs Away*, explores Rusty's experiences and adventures throughout his teenage life. After the death of his father and grandparents, Rusty was left in the custody of Mr. Harrison, a cousin of Rusty's father. Mr. Harrison assumed the mantle of a guardian. He gave Rusty a really hard time as he was very authoritative and took control of Rusty's life, something that Rusty did not appreciate at all. Rusty had grown up in a free environment where he was considered an equal and given full freedom to explore himself and people around him. Contrary to his childhood days were the days spent in Mr. Harrison's custody. In search of solace, he would look out of the window and befriend Indian villagers, something that was not approved by Mr. Harrison because of his sheer hatred towards the Indian community. Rusty, who had developed strong personality traits by then, did not pay

any heed to what Mr. Harrison said and became friends with an Indian girl named Koki. The friendship between the two developed and Rusty met her often in the absence of Mr. Harrison. This incident shows how bold and confident Rusty had become and how confidently he took decisions for himself. He was well aware of the risks involved, but he followed his heart anyway because he believed in physical and mental freedom. In Koki, Rusty found a companion who fulfilled his need for belongingness that was missing in Mr. Harrison's house. Rusty, again, recedes to second and third stage where he was seeking security and belongingness more than self-actualization. Soon enough, Koki left Dehra and Rusty found himself saddened again by the separation. He tried to find solace in nature again. Ever since his childhood, nature had provided him a parental security, something that immensely lacked in him after moving in with Mr. Harrison.

Due to lack of security, Rusty's focus shifted and instead of exploring and learning, he began to search for a loving environment. He wandered aimlessly searching for companionship, friendship, and solace. Rusty had been through a lot because of the death of people who influenced him the most and, therefore, he feels a lack of emotional support, love, and understanding in life. Mr. Harrison failed to provide Rusty a supportive and caring environment. So, it became his sole aim to feel at peace with himself. Koki helped him cope with insecurities, but she also disappointed him when she left Dehra. Due to Rusty's love for nature and need for parental support, he started spending more and more time with nature. And one day, he encountered Miss Mackenzie, an elderly woman who became a support system for Rusty. They shared an unusual, pure bond wherein Miss Mackenzie taught Rusty all about flora and he happily spent most of his days learning with her. Rusty showed immense patience and curiosity while dealing with her. He felt loved and supported in

the shadow of a parental figure, which encouraged him to learn in life. He showed a lot of enthusiasm for becoming a botanist, clearly showing how his love for nature influenced his way of being and his career choices. Rusty's friendship with Miss Mackenzie grew with time, but it didn't last very long because she passed away soon. Though their bond and friendship was short-lived, it left a huge impact on Rusty's life. In order to understand it according to the concept of hierarchy of needs, it must be understood that Rusty felt the need for security and belongingness when he was fixated in the second and third stage. Once this need was fulfilled in the company of Miss Mackenzie, it didn't take Rusty a long time to fulfill his fourth stage need, which is the need for self-esteem. Miss Mackenzie provided him with the same amount of respect and love that was provided by his grandparents and father. She considered him an equal and helped him fulfill his curiosity. She would spend time with him to teach him all about flora and this helped him to bounce back on the path to self-actualization. It is worthy to mention that even if a lot of situations in Rusty's life have brought him down or made him feel disheartened, he still managed to find a way to get back on the path to self-actualization. Reaching the highest potential is the innate nature of every human being and this has been clearly shown in Rusty's journey. Rogers' theory also supports this idea at this stage in Rusty's life. When Mr. Harrison failed to provide him with unconditional positive regard, he searched for it outside his immediate environment. A person needs a loving environment to grow and this is exactly what Rusty needed. Rusty found this loving environment in the company of Koki and Miss Mackenzie, who helped him in becoming a better person with a stronger personality. The noticeable traits displayed by Rusty at this stage in his life are patience, courage, sensitivity, and a need to grow. All these traits are that of any mentally healthy person.

At the time of living with his mother again for a few days, Rusty witnessed the murder of his stepfather. Being a strong, independent, and a conscious boy that he was, Rusty should have stepped up in such a situation, but he decided to become a partner in crime by remaining quiet about it. The reason behind this behavior could be his anger towards his stepfather, who did not let him read the books or move around freely. Rusty's mother also had no issues with the harsh behavior of her husband towards Rusty. He also had unresolved issues with his mother and was not able to forgive her for abandoning him at the tender age of four. Rusty, at that point of time, might have developed some distinct thought patterns and ideas that differed from who he really was and the onset of anger or psychological issues might have initiated. Rusty brushed off the memory of the incident and moved on with his life, and so did his mother.

At this time, Rusty shifts his need from learning to being around people who could understand and love him. In addition to this incident, there are many other incidents where Rusty feels the lack of love and self-worth shattered. When Rusty goes back to live with his guardians, he realizes that they are willing to send him to a boarding school. He interpreted this situation to mean that his guardians wanted to get rid of him. He feels low at this moment and his self-worth is shattered. The guardians play a crucial role at this point in Rusty's life because they, instead of lifting the boy's spirits, managed to hinder his personal growth and pull him down.

On the contrary, Rusty's self-esteem was boosted when a stranger, at a railway station, showed faith in him for travelling alone. Incidents like this, wherein an unknown woman introducing herself as Rusty's mother to other mothers, could prove to be dangerous and unsafe. But instead of being scared, Rusty felt the surge of self-esteem and self-confidence. The judgment of Rusty was clouded at that particular

time, but it also provided him a bit of relief and a tad more fulfillment of his need for being treated an equal and respected. Even though Rusty should have been more careful at that time, but his need to feel respected was so strong that it overpowered him and, therefore, he immediately forgives the stranger woman. Speaking hypothetically, if Rusty's esteem needs had been fulfilled, he would have been more careful in this situation because of his conscious and thoughtful nature and may have even backed out and not seek comfort in a stranger woman he met at a railway station who introduced herself to others as his mother, which was clearly a lie for reasons unknown.

After the death of all the major influential people in his life, he finds it hard to cope with the environment around him. So, Rusty wants to hold onto all the traits and characteristics he had acquired till now so that he doesn't feel the lack of those people. Consequently, his primary need becomes the need to feel fulfilled and respected.

Rusty was finally in his boarding school, where he befriended a boy named Daljeet. He felt confined and captivated in that boarding school. He had always been a strong, independent child who made decisions for himself and boarding school was hindering his life from being free. Daljeet, his new friend, faced the same problems in the school. In the novel, in one of the incidents, Rusty demands freedom for himself and expresses his desire to become a writer. This shows how confident the fifteen-year-old boy feels about himself and his life. This confidence and positivity was inculcated in him by his grandparents and father since his childhood and he still holds on to it in life. Rusty and Daljeet, in search of freedom, make a plan to run away from the school. As mentioned by Rusty, he was not looking for an escape from his life at the boarding school. He was rather running towards something that was larger than

life, something he wished for, and that something was travelling the entire world. He wanted to run away so that he could feel the independence and confidence that was missing in his life. This need for freedom and confidence comes from the surge of self-esteem in Rusty. When Rusty chose to become a writer, he made up his mind and was entirely confident about it. This shows a sense of self-worth and esteem in him. This fulfillment of esteem and fourth stage needs lead him to the way of achieving self-actualization. He wanted to live his dreams of travelling the world and learning as much as he could. He wanted to experience life through his own eyes and was keen to see everything that he had been reading about in the books and felt utterly ready to take that step. Running away from the school posed a serious risk and proved to be a bold step, but that did not back down Rusty from realizing his dreams. This particular incident shows how bold and confident Rusty feels to take a decision of running towards his dreams and fulfilling his innate desire of realizing and achieving self-actualization.

Also, Rusty may not have been like this, had he been in the shadow of Mr. Harrison always. Since he had the unconditional support of Daljeet, who shared the same ideas and philosophy with him, he was able to go in the direction of achieving his dreams. One can infer that the sense of confidence in Rusty was also the result of the unshakeable support of his friend, Daljeet. Because of Daljeet, he had the courage to go forward in that direction.

In the pursuit of chasing their dreams and feeling free, Rusty and Daljeet run away from the school and encounter numerous hardships. It has already been witnessed that Rusty possesses the ability to believe and trust strangers. This ability helps him move towards the direction of his destination. This trustworthiness is an outcome of his past experiences with the people and the stranger woman he met at the

railway station. It underlines the fact that the environment and the past experiences create a huge impact on people's lives. These past experiences reinforced Rusty to have a positive outlook toward strangers and develop a capacity to trust people. Later on, even though he was robbed and faced a lot of hardships, he did not back down. This entire incident of running away was a fiasco, but he was very strong headed and focused all this while to reach his goal. His ultimate goals were freedom and security. He did not feel fulfilled and satisfied in school because the teachers didn't let him grow and his writings were also not appreciated. Rusty was not escaping from something, but was running towards the fulfillment of his personal goals that would bring him peace. Humanists have, time and again, focused on the idea of the fulfillment of needs as the basic and innate motivational factor. If, at any moment, a person feels a lack in life, he goes after it. In psychological terms, an 'instrumental behavior' is initiated in order to achieve the goals. Once the goals are achieved, new goals unfold. This cycle continues till the death of a person and hence, it is said that a person never stops learning. Learning and fulfillment of a need is a lifetime process that starts right after birth and continues till the end. In school, Daljeet and Rusty's basic physiological, security, and belongingness needs were fulfilled, but the school was hindering them from growing and therefore, they took this bold step of running away from the school. This works in accordance with the hierarchy of needs which states that when the lower needs are fulfilled, higher order of needs arise and a person is then motivated to fulfill them. This is exactly what happened with Rusty and Daljeet at this stage of life. Even though their escape was not successful, it still taught Rusty an important lesson of life. Daljeet, a true companion and an optimist, consoled Rusty and gave him the hopes of escaping the following year again. This hope pacified Rusty a lot. His hopefulness and optimism, two important parameters for



leading a good life, contributed to his good mental health and psychological well-being. Even though Rusty was expelled from the school and got separated from Daljeet, the lessons learned from him remained with Rusty for the rest of his life. Daljeet proved to be a true companion and led Rusty to the path of strength, bravery, and will to fight for the dreams. These environmental subjects comprising of the people and experiences all along, shaped Rusty to become a mature adult who, in spite of numerous ups and downs in life, blossoms in the end.

Rusty moved to another school in Simla, where he befriended Omar. The reason behind this friendship, as stated by Rusty, was that Omar was quite similar to him. Rusty was desperately looking for a companion after his separation from Daljeet. It is clearly understood that after the death of his close relatives who had a huge influence on Rusty's life, he had dominantly receded to second and third stage of the hierarchy of needs. Even though he had fulfilled his esteem needs to an extent, he was still constantly looking for a partner. Because of this search for a companion, he could not strengthen his self-esteem, a trait that was already acquired permanently by Rusty in his growing years. In Omar, he found a friend and a companion with whom he could feel secure during the unfortunate India-Pakistan separation. The harsh reality of the outside world did not affect Rusty. He found solace in the company of Omar. There are instances in the novel where Rusty describes his escape into a secret tunnel as a journey in which he feels safe and enjoys being with Omar away from the hustle and bustle of the city. Rusty feels relieved and calm around Omar even in such dangerous situations. Similar kind of reaction was also noted in one of the past events, where he remained unusually calm in the presence of his father in a life-threatening situation. It can be interpreted that in the presence of a support system or somebody who understands and provides the unconditional positive regard,

a person is bound to grow into a psychologically healthy and strong person. It is quite evident in Rusty's case. Ever since his childhood, Rusty has always yearned for solace and has been lucky enough to have the support of people who have always provided him opportunities for his growth and to become better with each passing day. Be it his grandparents, his father, his nanny, Koki, Daljeet, or Omar, Rusty has always been influenced positively by the positive and healthy people in his life who believed in him and provided him a healthy environment to grow in and be himself.

Till this stage of his life, we find Rusty moving in the right direction towards achieving self-actualization. He became a strong personality who rose up in spite of the cruel circumstances and found his way through his teenage life as a strong headed person. The environment played a paramount role in it. Humanists also believed in the idea that the innate nature of a human being is good and this is evident in Rusty's life journey. Rusty, as we understand, was essentially good and just needed the right environment to grow in- the kind of environment he received from childhood to his teenage years. Life took a little detour in future events but till this stage, Rusty had done a commendable job. With his best potential and clarity of perception, he pursued as an undeterred free-flowing stream of water. He appears as a determined teen walking towards fulfilling his dreams with the conviction of never giving up, no matter what the circumstances are.

Rusty's optimism and positivity takes a back seat when Omar dies in an unexpected and fateful circumstance. He loses his will to be happy and becomes a recluse. At this stage, Rusty is very much affected by the loss of all the people he has always come close to. With a sad heart, Rusty goes on to graduate from his school and starts living with Mr. Harrison. Rusty, contradictory to his nature, feels scared in the shadow of Mr. Harrison. This contradiction may have risen due to the sadness

cropping up in his life. He feels incredibly lonely and starts avoiding Mr. Harrison. He tries to find peace by wandering in the market, but couldn't help overcome his loneliness. He yearned for friendship and a companion. Rusty, as portrayed in the novel, has always been a sensitive child and looking at the frequency of the fateful circumstances in his life, he is bound to lose hope. Even after getting offer of friendship from people he met in the *bazaar*, he does not feel completely comfortable and denies the offers. These instances show how life and its circumstances have taken a toll on him and made him momentarily lose faith in keeping connections or forming meaningful bonds. Rusty, at this point of life, feels scared and alienated, and is unable to form relationships. His confidence is low and he is scared of taking a stand for himself. These traits are highly contradictory to the way Rusty was raised in his childhood. The recent circumstances have influenced Rusty immensely, thus lowering his sense of wellbeing. He, now, feels himself in an environment where he is not entirely accepted. This non-acceptance from the environment and the loss of true people in his life created sadness. It is crucial to notice how changing circumstances can influence the traits of a human being and affect the mental well-being. Even a child as strong as Rusty fell into the bouts of sadness.

Soon enough, Rusty experiences freedom for some time when Mr. Harrison goes out of town for a couple of days. He suddenly feels free indicating how captivated and closed he felt in the house of Mr. Harrison. He finally felt motivated to do something about his melancholic life. As soon as he found his momentary freedom, he was again on the track of fulfilling his needs. He was looking for freedom and a way to rebel against Mr. Harrison, so that he can feel his confidence back again and bring peace in his life. This incident shows that the need to reach higher potential in life may halt for some time, but can never die. By going to the

*bazaar*, Rusty felt his sense of freedom and confidence returning. This is something he had to do for himself to fulfill his needs of self-esteem and security. He needed to belong to somebody and break the barriers he had created within the self. He met Somi, whose friendship offer he had earlier declined. Being surrounded with good people helped him feel better and fulfilled. Somi introduced him to other friends and showed him a different side of India that he was unable to see because of Mr. Harrison's strict rules. These rebellious acts reminded Rusty of his brave nature and how he was raised in his childhood. Rusty was also an ardent wanderer since his childhood and now wandering in the streets of the Indian market, finding his own ways, and knowing about a new culture and tradition with the help of Somi, he felt complete again. He fulfilled his needs of the second, third, and fourth stage and was again on the road to self-actualization. Because of these incidents, he felt better again and walked in the direction towards higher learning and betterment in life.

Soon enough, Rusty's enjoyment came to a stop when Mr. Harrison returned from his trip and got to know that he was mingling with the Indian kids and had occasional visits to the *bazaar*. He was already scared to face Mr. Harrison. His feeling of fear shows that even though he was back on his way towards achieving confidence and freedom, he still wasn't sure of himself. He still feared Mr. Harrison and showed his anxiety when confronted by him. To Rusty's shock, Mr. Harrison beat him black and blue. That moment, his anger rose and he realized that Mr. Harrison had acted in an unjust and unfair manner towards him. The feeling of rebellion bubbled in him and it burst out on the day he desired to play Holi with his friends. Rusty knew that playing Holi with Indian kids would irk Mr. Harrison, but he went ahead with his decision and, to his surprise, he didn't feel even slightly scared. He understood that the concept of racial discrimination does no good to anybody. He

also understood the unfair treatment of his guardian and did not support it. The same evening, when he played Holi, he was beaten again by his guardian. In a fit of rage, he thrashed his guardian in return. At that moment, Rusty realized that he was not a child anymore and that he had respect for himself and his freedom and did not deserve to be beaten like this. We see Rusty turning into a man who is taking a stand for himself and voicing out against injustice. We see him full of confidence and not scared of anybody. At that moment, Rusty noticed a small window to sneak out of the house and he ran away. The streak of bravery was always present in him because of his childhood upbringing. At that moment, he felt the ultimate freedom, something he was trying to experience since he first moved with his guardian. After so many years, he tasted freedom and even though he had no place to go or no plan for the future, he felt incredibly confident and brave. One could say that this confidence emerged due to the constant support of his friend Somi, a companion who provided him the security and space after Rusty ran away from his guardian's house. Such circumstances provided support and love to enhance a person's capability to reach his maximum potential and give him a space to grow. Rusty, after running away from his guardian, went to live with Somi and his family where he felt at home. For the first time in his life, he realized what home was and was extremely happy and relieved to be there. Rusty acts like a maturing adult at this stage, where he understands the concept of home and free choice. Soon enough, he moves out of Somi's house and sustains his life by giving English tuitions. From here, the third novel starts which explores Rusty's introspection about his life and world around him. Rusty finds himself in love with a woman and experiences the feelings he has never experienced before. The novel ends on a note where Rusty bares his heart out to the woman he loves.

Rusty's life started on a rough patch, but in a loving environment. Here, we have Rogers' theory into play. Even though Rusty's parents were separated, the loving and secure environment provided by his grandparents was enough to make him grow into a healthy individual. Even though Rusty's father lived away, he made sure that Rusty understands how much he is loved. It makes one wonder how love can transcend distance and makes one happy. Rusty grew up to be a free, young, and a curious child. His downfalls in life came because of the tragedies that struck him. The death of all the people close to him put him in circumstances that he did not like. He also oscillated between many stages of the hierarchy. He was sometimes on the path to self-actualization and at times, he was down at his lowest point in his life where he did not want to indulge with anybody. It is pertinent to mention that life is not a static path. It has curves and bridges, and Maslow's theory clearly explains that once a need is fulfilled, that does not mean that the same need will not arise again. For instance, if a hungry man finds food and fills his stomach, it doesn't mean that the man will never get hungry again. After the need is fulfilled, the lack returns after sometimes. And in Rusty's life, the lack returned again and again. He made quite a lot of acquaintances and connections all through his teenage years, and this need for belongingness comes from his childhood. His grandparents raised him in an environment where he could befriend the people he wanted and interact with the animals of his choice. He was always encouraged to be curious and loving. Along with the search for freedom, he also searched for real and authentic friends. He looked for ways to develop real connections and when he could not do that, he would take lonely walks in the nature because nature provided him with solace and comfort. The life journey of Rusty is the epitome of Maslow's 'hierarchy of needs' theory. Maslow has clearly laid down the stages through which a person goes to reach his maximum potential. Rusty went

through all these stages, time and again. There were days when he could not gather courage to get over the hardships, while some days passed easily without causing any discomfort. His environment and people have influenced him greatly. When some people like his grandparents and friends tried to encourage him and provide him with a suitable environment to grow in, there were other people like his guardian who tried to restrict him in life. But ultimately he managed to find his freedom- the freedom that he always aspired and deserved.

Through the combination of Maslow's 'hierarchy of needs' and Rogers' 'theory of self,' it can be easily understood why and how Rusty grew up to be the individual he is at the end. In the entire journey of Rusty, different circumstances in life made him a different person at different stages, but it all added up in the end when Rusty walked the path of maturity. It is clearly evident how paramount the environment and the people in the environment have been in Rusty's life. According to Maslow's 'hierarchy of needs' theory, he walks in the direction of ultimate fulfillment at the end of the third novel. He experiences all the strong emotions associated with family, friends, and love, and grows into a human being with better understanding of life.

Rusty's life has been a series of ups and downs, but as the humanists have pointed out the need to reach the highest potential, Rusty has achieved it at almost every stage of his life. He may not have reached his maximum potential at the age of eighteen and still had a long way to go, but he managed to extract and be the best at that stage of his life.

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