

A Long Walk with Grann

-Ruskin Bond

Detailed Summary:

Granny, an elderly woman living in a Himalayan village, is slowly losing her eyesight. Though she wears a pair of glasses, they are over ten years old—scratched and worn out—making her vision very poor. Despite this, she resists the idea of going to the eye hospital in Mussoorie to get new glasses. She doesn't want to admit her growing dependence, and more importantly, she doesn't want to leave her beloved grandson Mani, who is eleven years old. Granny has been raising Mani ever since his mother died when he was just a year old. She is deeply attached to him, having not only taken care of him and his father but also managing the household with great energy and dedication.

Mani and his father insist that it's time for her to have her eyes checked. Granny tries to resist, pointing out the long two-day journey and the difficulties involved. But when Mani offers to accompany her, Granny quickly changes her mind. She becomes enthusiastic, even excited about the trip, and starts planning what she can buy in Mussoorie—seeds, a bell for the cow, shoes for Mani, and a pullover for her son. Mani's father, however, warns that they only have ₹100 to spend. Granny adds ₹50 of her own and insists that they will manage, joking that they'll stay in a hotel rather than a bus shelter.

The next morning, under a light drizzle, Granny and Mani begin their journey on foot to Nain, a small town along the way. Mani carries their bedding-roll, while Granny carries an umbrella and a shopping bag. Along the route, Mani picks wild berries, but Granny keeps walking at a steady pace, determined and energetic despite her age. They enjoy the beauty of the mountains and stop to eat a simple meal under a pine tree, drinking from a spring.

By late afternoon, they reach Nain and stay at Uncle's house. The next day, they take the only bus to Mussoorie. The bus ride is rough, noisy, and uncomfortable. The bus halts suddenly due to a massive landslide that blocks the road. With rocks still falling and the road completely blocked, most passengers decide to return to Nain. But Granny, undeterred, insists on walking to Mussoorie, which is still ten miles away. Mani agrees, and they take a steep shortcut over the mountain to bypass the landslide.

The rest of the journey is physically demanding. They climb up steep paths, cross through dense forests, windswept hills, and walk over rocky terrains. But Granny remains cheerful and energetic. She had wisely packed food—pakoras, buns, and peaches—which they eat on the way. Despite the hard trek, they finally reach Mussoorie in the evening and spend the night at a dharamsala near a temple since they can't afford a hotel.

The next morning, they visit the eye hospital. After a long wait, Granny meets the eye specialist, who is shocked to see the condition of her ancient glasses. He jokes about sending them to a museum and tells her that using such glasses has likely harmed her eyes more than helped. He then tests her eyes and reassures her that she is not going blind; her vision is just very weak and she needs proper glasses. As he tries different lenses, Granny suddenly begins to see more clearly—starting with the letters on the board and eventually

the doctor's face. When asked to look behind her, she turns and sees Mani clearly for the first time in many years, much to her joy. She becomes emotional and starts praising him, saying how handsome he looks, though she also teases him for needing a haircut, a wash, new shoes, and buttons on his shirt.

After getting her new glasses ordered, Granny insists on going shopping. They buy new shoes for Mani, a warm woollen pullover for his father, a cowbell, seeds, bulbs, and a new umbrella for Granny herself.

The next day, on the return bus journey, Granny is overjoyed. For the first time in years, she can clearly see the landscapes, people, animals, trees, and a beautiful rainbow in the sky. Although her eyesight isn't perfect, it's a huge improvement, and she chats excitedly, enjoying the vibrant world around her. As she talks, Mani, tired from the long journey, slowly falls asleep, resting his head gently on Granny's shoulder. The story ends on this warm and tender note.

Themes:

1. Love and Intergenerational Bonding:

- The story beautifully portrays the deep emotional connection between Granny and Mani. Despite her age and failing eyesight, Granny is energized by the idea of traveling with her grandson. Their mutual care and respect are at the heart of the narrative.

2. Determination and Resilience:

- Granny, though seventy and visually impaired, proves to be strong, independent, and determined. She walks long distances, climbs mountains, and faces hardships without complaint, showing incredible inner strength.

3. Simplicity and Joy in Little Things:

- The story celebrates small joys—eating wild berries, sipping spring water, seeing a rainbow, or buying a cowbell. It reminds readers that happiness can be found in the simplest of things.

4. Changing Perspectives:

- Literally and metaphorically, Granny gains a new perspective on the world after getting her new glasses. Her renewed vision symbolizes clarity, hope, and rediscovery of joy.

5. Coming of Age:

- Mani, though still a child, shows maturity by taking care of his grandmother, leading her on the journey, and showing responsibility. The trip is a growing experience for him as well.

6. Rural vs Urban Life:

- The contrast between the peaceful village life and the chaotic journey to the city shows the simplicity of rural existence and the struggles faced by villagers in accessing basic healthcare.

7. Humour and Warmth:

- Ruskin Bond uses gentle humour and warmth throughout the story, especially in Granny's dialogues and the hospital scenes, making the narrative both touching and lighthearted.

Conclusion:

A Long Walk with Granny is a heartwarming tale of courage, love, and the human spirit. It celebrates the beauty of relationships, the strength of the elderly, and the magic of shared journeys. Through simple yet vivid storytelling, Ruskin Bond reminds us that sometimes, it takes a long walk to see things clearly—both literally and emotionally.

Textual questions and answers

1. Why does Granny finally agree to travel to Mussoorie?

At first, Granny does not want to go to Mussoorie because it is a long journey and she doesn't want to leave Mani alone. But when Mani says that he will come with her, she becomes happy and agrees to go. She loves Mani very much and does not like being away from him. When she finds out he will be by her side, she even starts planning shopping during the trip!

2. Granny's courage and determination are evident in the story. Substantiate this statement with instances.

Granny shows great courage and strength many times in the story. Even though she is seventy years old and her eyesight is very weak, she walks a long distance with Mani to reach Mussoorie. When the road is blocked by a landslide, most people turn back, but Granny chooses to climb the mountain on foot instead. She walks through forests, over hills, and in the rain with an old umbrella. She never gives up and stays cheerful. This shows how brave and determined she is.

3. How does Mani support Granny during their journey? What does this reveal about his character?

Mani helps Granny in many ways. He carries their bedding-roll, walks beside her, and checks on her comfort. He picks berries, shares food, and always makes sure she is not tired. He even reminds her to rest if needed. This shows that Mani is kind, loving, and responsible. Even though he is just eleven, he takes care of Granny like a grown-up. It also shows how much he loves and respects her.

4. 'A shoulder to rest on is a blessing indeed.' Don't you agree? How does the story highlight the bond between generations?

Yes, it is true that having someone to lean on is a great blessing. In the story, the bond between Granny and Mani is very special. Granny took care of Mani when he was small, and now Mani takes care of her during the journey. When they rest their heads on each other's shoulders in the bus, it shows their deep love and care. The story shows that love between grandparents and grandchildren is strong and full of support, just like good friends helping each other.

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Let's list the words/phrases that helped Mani describe the place in the table below.

Describing words/phrases

Nouns described

snow-capped

peak

crystal-clear

river

beam of light

clouds

tall dark green

trees

misty morning

day/morning

vast

valley

wonderful green shades

valley

brehtaking

view/scene

glowing

trees

These words helped Mani describe the beautiful scene he saw from the summit. Let me know if you'd like help drawing the picture too!

Activity C – Describing the Place in the Picture:

The place looks very beautiful and peaceful. The sky is bright with fluffy white clouds and a touch of blue. The green fields are fresh and clean, and the tall trees with golden-yellow leaves make the place look colourful and bright. It is a calm and relaxing place, perfect for a walk or picnic. The place looks like a perfect countryside.

Activity 2 A – Narrative by Mani to His Father:

Title: Mani Shares His Trip to Mussoorie

“Papa, you won’t believe how exciting our journey was!” said Mani. “Granny and I walked through forests, picked berries, and drank water from a spring. We saw parrots flying and hills shining in the sunlight. When we reached Nain, it started raining, but we stayed at Uncle’s house. Then we took the bus to Mussoorie, but a landslide stopped us! Granny didn’t panic. We walked over the mountain—just the two of us—and finally reached Mussoorie! The doctor was so funny. He said Granny’s glasses belonged in a museum! Granny can now see clearly and says I need a haircut and new shoes. It was a long, tiring, but beautiful adventure!”

Activity 2 B – Diary Entry by the Eye-Specialist:

Title: A Special Patient I Met Today

Date: _____

Today, I met a very interesting lady and her grandson. She had been using the same pair of glasses for over ten years! When I saw them, I almost laughed – they were so old and scratched! But Granny had a strong spirit. Even though she couldn’t see much, she had walked all the way from her village with her loving grandson, Mani. She made us all laugh with her smart and kind words. Fitting her new glasses was a joy – her smile when she saw Mani clearly again was unforgettable. This was one of my best days at the hospital!

Activity 2 C – Descriptive Paragraph of a Tourist Spot:

Title: A Beautiful Trip to Munnar

Last month, I visited Munnar, a famous hill station in Kerala. The place was green and full of tea gardens. The air was cool and fresh. I saw clouds touching the mountains and small waterfalls on the way. There were many beautiful flowers and birds everywhere. I enjoyed sipping hot tea while looking at the hills. Munnar was the most peaceful and beautiful place I have ever seen. I want to go there again!

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