

# Binya's Blue Umbrella: A Symbol of Generosity And Kindness in Human Relationships

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## Abstract:

In the quaint setting of a small village, "The Blue Umbrella" unfolds the tale of Binya, whose unassuming life undergoes a profound transformation upon acquiring a coveted blue umbrella, triggering a wave of envy and avarice among her fellow villagers. This study meticulously examines the symbolic layers embedded within the blue umbrella, elucidating its thematic role in depicting generosity and kindness. A scrutiny of the novel reveals a rich tapestry of emotions, ranging from materialistic desires and jealousy to acts of kindness. Binya's socio-economic struggles and her possession of a leopard claw necklace lay the groundwork for the symbolic significance bestowed upon her newfound possession, the blue umbrella. The pivotal exchange between Binya and an English lady serves as a poignant showcase of generosity, marked by the reciprocal exchange of cherished possessions. This sets the stage for the interplay between the blue umbrella and benevolence. The narrative unfolds to reveal the transformative power of the umbrella, as witnessed through the interactions with the shopkeeper, Ram Bharosa. These encounters lay bare the repercussions of greed while hinting at the potential for redemption.

The evolving relationship between Binya and her cherished blue umbrella serves as a compelling canvas for exploring the intricate dynamics of society. The villagers' initial reactions, steeped in envy, gradually shift towards empathy, underscoring the overarching themes of generosity and kindness intricately woven into the fabric of this captivating narrative.

**Keywords:** Binya's Blue Umbrella, Symbolism, Generosity, Kindness, Psychological Analysis, Character Development, Cultural Implications

## Methods:

To address this gap, incorporating psychological analysis techniques, such as character psychology assessments and narrative identity studies, could provide a deeper understanding of the internal conflicts faced by characters in relation to the blue umbrella. Furthermore, employing ethnographic methods to explore the cultural nuances surrounding generosity and kindness within the village community could enhance the contextual interpretation of the symbolism.

## Research Gap:

While existing studies delve into the symbolism of Binya's blue umbrella in Ruskin Bond's "The Blue Umbrella," there is a notable gap in exploring the psychological dimensions of how this symbolism influences the characters' internal struggles and personal growth. Additionally, there is limited examination of the cultural implications of generosity and kindness as portrayed through the blue umbrella within the context of the specific village setting in the novel.

**Discussion:****Chapter 1:**

In the tranquil hills of Garhwal, a young mountain girl named Binya roams freely with her cows, Neelu and Gori. Unfazed by the solitude of the mountains, she only feels a bit lost in the bustling market-town. Binya, around ten years old, belongs to a simple family surviving on their tiny terraced fields.

With her sturdy frame, fair skin, and a leopard's claw hanging from her necklace, Binya encounters a group of plain holiday-makers during her wanderings. Enchanted by a vibrant blue umbrella among the picnickers, she is drawn towards it, catching their attention. The tourists, noticing her torn and dirty clothes, decide to offer her food.

Amidst the discussion about her necklace's significance, the tourists, fascinated by the charm, attempt to buy it from Binya. However, her focus is on the alluring blue umbrella. A humorous yet tense negotiation ensues as the tourists debate whether to give her money or picnic items in exchange for the pendant. Eventually, the young woman, captivated by the pendant, impulsively offers the blue umbrella to Binya in exchange.

Binya, forgetting the onlookers, joyfully accepts the umbrella—a symbol of unexpected kindness and generosity in human relationships. The blue umbrella becomes more than a mere object; it transforms into a representation of the warmth exchanged between strangers in the midst of the serene Himalayas.

**Chapter 2: Two**

In the quaint village where BINYA lived, her blue umbrella was an intriguing constant. She rarely closed it, even indoors, much to the annoyance of Bijju, who found it cumbersome. Despite his efforts to fold it shut, INYA would open it again shortly. To her, the umbrella's true beauty was revealed when it stood open.

Every time Binya ventured outside, be it to tend to the cows, fetch water, or deliver milk, the blue umbrella accompanied her, a vivid spot against the hillside. Ram Bharosa, the tea shopkeeper on the Tehri road, was puzzled by this sight. When he inquired about it, Binya explained that she had received the umbrella in exchange for her lucky claw.

Ram Bharosa, bemused, suggested buying the seemingly impractical umbrella. Binya, however, valued it at fifteen rupees. Despite negotiations, she settled for a toffee, leaving the shopkeeper mesmerized by the ethereal blue as she walked away.

As Binya rested under a pine tree, a mischievous wind stirred. It playfully lifted the umbrella and led Binya on a spirited chase. The hill's slope increased, and Binya raced after the elusive umbrella, propelled by the whimsical wind.

The wind, having carried the umbrella to the cliff's edge, teetered on the brink before plunging down. Undeterred, Binya peered over the cliff to find the umbrella caught in a wild cherry tree. Fearlessly, she descended the cliff, navigating precarious terrain to rescue her cherished possession.

**Chapter 3:**

Three Years earlier, Bijju's painful encounter with a bee hive had left him immune to bee stings. Returning from school, hungry and stained with Kingora berry juice, he resisted Ram Bharosa's offer of credit, knowing the potential consequences of owing the shopkeeper.

Bijju encountered Binya with the cows, still clutching the open blue umbrella. Her mother had repaired the small tears in the silk. Binya, grateful for the Kingora berries, handed the umbrella to Bijju as they headed home.

Villagers couldn't help but envy Binya's unique possession, including the schoolmaster's wife, who deemed it inappropriate for a farmer's daughter to have such a fine umbrella. The Pujari, caretaker of the temple, failed to find a similar umbrella in town.

As the monsoon approached, Binya eagerly awaited the rain. When it finally arrived, she opened her umbrella, reveling in the experience, even as she got wet. In the downpour, she found Bijju in a cave, and together they shared the umbrella. Despite their mother's call to bring the cows in, they lingered, testing the umbrella's resilience in the rain.

#### **Chapter Four:**

It unfolds with vivid descriptions of the monsoon season, portraying the transformation of hills into lush green landscapes. The narrative captures the beauty of nature amid incessant rains, highlighted by the emergence of ferns, giant lilies, and a white mist drifting from the valley. However, this idyllic setting is marred by the presence of leeches, a nuisance that Binya contends with daily.

The author weaves a tale of survival when Binya encounters a threatening black snake during her journey. Swift thinking and resourcefulness come to her aid as she uses her open umbrella to thwart the snake's attack, showcasing the unconventional uses of this seemingly ordinary item. The episode unfolds with a mix of suspense and relief, as Binya escapes unscathed.

The narrative also touches upon the challenges brought by the relentless rain, such as flooding that displaces small animals and prompts Binya's mother to deal with unwelcome field-rats. The characters adapt to the season's quirks, with Bijju disturbing scorpions and being cautious about snakes.

The story takes an intriguing turn as Ram Bharosa, captivated by Binya's blue umbrella, yearns to possess it despite its fading color. This desire becomes a focal point, leading to a quirky exchange between him and Rajaram, an employee in his shop. The dialogue explores the intrinsic value of beauty and desire, revealing Ram Bharosa's eccentric attachment to the umbrella.

#### **Chapter Five:**

It introduces a new subplot involving Binya's quest for porcupine-quills, emphasizing their value as charms. Rajaram seizes the opportunity to steal her umbrella, setting off a chase that involves Binya, Bijju, and a tussle in the shallow stream. The revelation that Rajaram was acting on Ram Bharosa's instructions adds a layer of complexity to the unfolding events, leaving the reader curious about the characters' motivations and relationships.

#### **Chapter Six:**

In early October, as the rains subsided, the atmosphere transformed. Leeches vanished, ferns turned yellow, and the sunlight painted the green hills with a mellow, golden hue. Bijju's joyous days were marked by the pleasure of roasted corn after school. Binya's umbrella, though worn, retained its charm, the pale milky blue a symbol of village admiration.

October, a kind month, extended its contentment to everyone except Ram Bharosa. His futile attempts to obtain Binya's umbrella had stained his reputation, leading villagers to forsake his shop. Branded "Trusty

Umbrella Thief," he endured loneliness, regret, and dwindling business. Despite October's warmth, Ram Bharosa's world was desolate.

Bijju, carefree, whistled by the shop daily, while Binya, feeling a connection to Ram Bharosa's suffering, quietly passed, occasionally closing her umbrella near the shop. Wrestling with guilt, she pondered if her love for the umbrella surpassed her concern for people. Wanting to ease Ram Bharosa's pain, she closed the umbrella near his shop, reserving its display for distant places.

One day, with ten paise in her pocket, Binya entered the shop, becoming Ram Bharosa's first customer in weeks. Suspicion lingered, but she only sought a toffee. It was a pivotal moment when, seeing her closed umbrella, Ram Bharosa contemplated keeping it. However, in a generous twist, Binya refused, realizing that an umbrella wasn't everything. Leaving Ram Bharosa with the prized possession, she embraced the open road beneath the bright blue sky.

### Chapter Seven:

Now, the blue umbrella, a gift from Binya, graced Ram Bharosa's life. Its presence prompted him to venture into sun or rain, restoring vitality. Left open outside the shop, it became a communal umbrella, worn and patched but still the village's finest.

Ram Bharosa's shop welcomed visitors once again. Offering extra milk or sugar, he mended relationships. A recent encounter with a bear, losing a claw on the tin roof, brought unexpected luck. Turning the claw into a silver pendant, Ram Bharosa gifted it to Binya, symbolizing gratitude. The village flourished with a sense of interconnectedness, as Binya, surrounded by the music of bells and the mountains, walked home singing, bringing joy to the darkening glade.

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