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Sub: (English (B.A) Part - II Paper - VI )

Topic : The Heart of The Matter - Graham Greene

Q Character sketch of Louise Scobie.

(Ans) Louise Scobie is the leading female character of the novel, "The Heart of the Matter" written by Graham Greene. The characters in the 'The Heart of the Matter' are alive and convincing. Greene is a great creator of living characters. He excels in probing the minds of his characters. He has used the stream-of-consciousness technique to define the characters.

Louise Scobie is the wife of Major Scobie. She has been married to him for fourteen years, but their conjugal life has not been happy and contented. It was not like this always because, <sup>Henry</sup> Scobie has ~~changed~~ accepted Roman Catholicism, to marry her. No doubt he loved her for some time after marriage, but now his love for her has diminished for various reasons. In the novel she has been defined by one of the minor character Harris in these words: "Perhaps if I had a wife like that, I'd

sleep with niggers too. You'll meet her soon. She's the city intellectual, she likes art, poetry. Got up an exhibition of arts for the shipwrecked seaman. Poor old Scobie." Here we find that Harris has praised her that she is intellectual but at the same time he didn't consider her a ~~perfect~~ <sup>adorable</sup> wife. Even in the club Mr. Fraser remarked about Louise that Wilson had been suitably punished for taking interest in a literary woman Louise. This shows that Louise is also not popular among other people.

Louise is a woman of worldly outlook. She has never been happy with the job of Scobie. She was eagerly waiting for the promotion of Henry Scobie as Commissioner of police. She believes in making a show of her position, but when Scobie didn't get promotion she gets very disheartened. It is unbearable for her so she decided to go to South Africa, and her decision created a chain of events which bring tragedy in the life of Henry Scobie and her married life.

At first Henry does manage the expenses of her trip from taking money from Yusuf which actually put him into the hand of a evil person and in the absence of Louise, he develops an illicit relation with ~~Helen~~ Helen Wolf which was not possible if she had

not gone to South Africa.

Roman Catholicism is one of the important traits of the character Louise. Even in her religion she appears to be superficial, though acts as an orthodox. She attends the church regularly and participates in the Mass and communion and also asks her husband to do so. But she believes in the rites and ceremonies only, she is not a devout and self-sacrificing Catholic. ~~Her~~ She forced Scobie to attend the church just to assure herself if he has had adulterous relation with Helen because a Roman Catholic is not allowed to attend these ceremonies in a state of moral sin. Even when she comes to know that Scobie has committed suicide, she is horrified that Scobie would be eternally damned for having adulterous relation with Helen and for finally committing suicide. But Father Rank has liberal views about God and religion. He furiously replies to Louise, "For goodness sake, Mrs Scobie, don't imagine you or I know a thing about God's mercy." He further says; "But I think from what I saw of him, that he really loved God." This all shows that Louise's Catholicism is somewhat narrow whereas Scobie's inspite of all his moral laxities was certainly better.

Louise, however, has ~~done~~ taken some wrong decision in her life but

she is a devoted wife. On various occasions she is seen greatly concerned about the welfare of Scobie. When he was going to Bamboe she becomes quite restless for his safety. She even praises her husband ability before Wilson. However Wilson shows his deep passion for love for her. But Louise refused him flatly that she loves Ticki. She when comes to know about her husband's affair with Kelet, still she wants to protect her married life and after returning back from South Africa in between her journey, she promises him that she is not going to rattle him anymore. Wilson though tried hard to prove Scobie defaulter before her but she want to save her marriage from collapsing at any cost.

On the whole, Louise appears to be a pathetic figure in the novel, she lost her child, which bring loneliness in her life, Scobie's promotion instead bring dissatisfaction in her life and her inner restlessness motivated her to go to South Africa which brings final tragedy in her life when she lost <sup>both</sup> the love and life of Henry Scobie - all these make her a figure to be pitied. She is a woman who is pitied by her husband; she is a character who is pitied by the readers. However at the end she gets the love and attention of Wilson.