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Topic : The Heart of the Matter - Graham Greene

\* Character sketch of Helen Rolt.

The characters in 'The Heart of the Matter' are alive and convincing, Graham Greene is a great creator of living characters. Most of the characters are individuals. He gives a large variety of characters but aims at analysing the individual especially. He excels in probing the mind of the characters. The present novel is a story of love and marriage. It portrays a man's married life and his extra-marital love affairs.

Henry Scobie is married to Louise whom he had loved with all his heart. But the situation changed when Helen Rolt entered in their life. She may be considered as the second heroine after Louise. Helen has been introduced in the novel rather late, almost just before the middle of the story. She is one of the survivors of the torpedoed British ship. Before being picked up by the

rescue vessel, these survivors remained in the ship for forty days in a boat, so their condition was miserable. Helen Rolt condition was also critical. The French officer who was in charge of these survivors informed Scobie that this nineteen year old girl, named Helen Rolt, had lost her husband whom she had married just before boarding the ill-fated ship. Scobie who was one of the receiving officers was moved to see her in that condition. Here it was a natural sympathy found in the heart of Scobie for her.

But soon the situation changed when Scobie came across her in one of the Nissen huts provided to Helen Rolt for lodgings. Helen does not recognize Scobie but Scobie recognized her and for the first time he saw her so closely, he found her a simple girl. In their first encounter she offered him a drink and narrated her story to him. Her mother had died ten years ago. Her father is a clergyman and when Scobie asked her if she wants to go back home, she expressed her desire to stay there. He promised her to bring her some more stamps next morning. Here we find a amazing bonding between the two. She tells Scobie that she liked him so much and Scobie tells her, "I like you too". Soon this

Simple interaction of polite statement changes into love-affair.

Scobie was forty Nine while Helen was only Nineteen still in the very second meeting, their love-life began. Both shared their suffering of loved ones; Helen, her husband and Scobie, his daughter. This also brings closer to them. Scobie is attracted towards Helen not because of lust. His attitude towards her is that of pity, affection and sympathy. Helen's character is also seen in clearer light. She has relation with Freddie Bagster but when Scobie comes in her life, she refuses to see Bagster.

The relationship between Helen and Scobie continued because of the absence of Louise also. Henry Scobie always has a feeling of guilt for this relationship and but ~~can't~~ he continues it in the absence of her wife. But Helen's case was different. She does not feel any sense of guilt in having relation with Scobie. She complains that he comes to her only in the darkness of night and that he doesn't write a single letter to her. She once tells Scobie, "I don't care a bladdy damn if people talk!"

Helen is a daughter of Clergyman, but she does not believe in God. She had forsaken her beliefs as soon as she

left the school. Contrary to her, Scobie has deep ~~bad~~ sense of morality due to Catholicism. Therefore once Helen has rebuked Scobie and says, "It's a wonderful excuse being a Catholic. It doesn't stop you sleeping with me - it only stops you marrying me." This shows Helen clearcut attitude towards life.

Inspite of the fact that Helen is a garrulous girl, she has a genuine love for Scobie. She tells him frankly that she would not be able to live without her. She never wants to see him in any difficulty for her sake. She wants to marry Scobie but again her genuine feelings for him that she proposes to withdraw herself from his life in favour of Louise.

After the death of Scobie, Helen is utterly broken. In fact she had felt that she would be secure in the shelter of Scobie, but she now feels utterly alone. When Bagster asks her if she does not love him at all, she emphatically replies, "No, I don't love anyone."

It is true that Helen's love for Scobie is not acceptable on the social and ethical norm but it's true that ~~Louise~~<sup>she</sup> has loved Scobie truly while Scobie has loved him out of pity and sympathy. But it is true that Helen and ~~Louise~~<sup>Scobie</sup> has a inner bonding which is missing in the case of Louise.