

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT: READING SHASHI DESHPANDE'S

THE DARK HOLDS NO TERRORS

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ABSTRACT

Shashi Deshpande (1938–) is one of the prominent Indian English writers of the present time having numerous literary books, mainly novels, short stories and children's fiction to her name. In her writings, she has addressed issues mainly related to women. In her first published novel, *The Dark Holds No Terrors* (1980), she has boldly addressed sensitive issues like marital rape, a woman earning more than her husband, mother's preference for a son over daughter through the protagonist, Sarita (Saru), of the story. Sarita is an ambitious, well-educated, economically independent, modern middle-class married woman. She faces discriminatory treatment over her brother, Dhruva, by her mother only because of her gender in her childhood. Later, she becomes a successful doctor but she lives like a trapped animal in the hands of her husband, Manohar, who earns less than her. These incidents compel her to her agonising search for her own true self. At the end, she realises that her life is her own and the dark really holds no terrors for her. Terror doesn't come from outside rather it comes from inside. She overcomes her fear and decides to face her life and her husband with confidence. Sarita has to undergo a troublesome journey to reach this end. This paper aims at analyzing the central character, Sarita, from various perspectives in relation to the other characters of the novel. It will also examine the struggles which Sarita has gone through and eventually her emergence from darkness to light as an empowered and confident individual.

KEY WORDS: Love, Marriage, Sex, Patriarchy, Terror, Identity