

MWA Paper

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Title:

The dynamics in Margot and Robert's relationship left me with a productive discomfort, because it caused me to reflect on how digital interactions often overshadow in-person interactions in modern relationships, which can lead to misunderstandings or inaccurate perceptions. This discomfort was unsettling because it showed how false perceptions could potentially lead to uncomfortable and dangerous situations. This forced me to confront the uncomfortable truth about the susceptibility to danger in modern dating.

My initial reaction to Margot and Robert's interactions was a mix of discomfort and frustration. I watched Margot navigate through her own feelings with uncertainty and constantly questioning her perception of Robert based on his strange behavior. This constant back and forth going on in Margot's head caused me to feel frustrated but also empathetic towards her. I saw her struggle with the same concerns that many people deal with in modern dating by wondering what someone's intentions are and who they truly are behind a screen. However, this discomfort was productive as it made me reflect on the risks of developing connections with people through digital interactions.

The one scene that struck me the most was when Margot started to resent Robert while at his house, but then she felt backed into a corner because she wasn't able to communicate her discomfort to him. Roupenian writes this so expertly from Margot's perspective which caused me to empathize with Margot's reluctance to confront her doubts. It brought up questions about how often people (women, in this case, especially) find themselves in this situation and feel

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compelled not to speak up to avoid awkwardness or escalating the situation? I realize my discomfort came from Margot's helplessness during this scene and a recognition of the risks that come with misjudging someone's intentions.

Looking back on my reaction to reading Margot's story, I felt discomfort as she quickly got attached to the idea of Robert and then it turned into reluctance. This was mainly because her early interactions with Robert were mainly through technology, and once they interacted in person, her perception of Robert quickly changed. As Roupenian writes, "She still didn't know much about him, because they never talked about anything personal" (Roupenian 3), which suggests that Margot's perception of Robert was purely based on surface level interactions that felt exciting yet vague. My discomfort grew as I realized how easily we can create false perceptions of people when interactions mainly are from digital interactions rather than in-person interactions that give a better understanding of a person's character. Margot is the ultimate cautionary tale of how first impressions can create dangerously inaccurate perceptions and how easily people can fall victim to them.

However, if Roupenian had Margot try to express her discomfort or convey her hesitation to Robert, I would have felt differently.

In this alternate scene, Margot expresses her hesitation and discomfort directly to Robert before they leave for his house. After he suggests going back to his place, Margot hesitates and explains that she's feeling uncertain. Robert is surprised by this, but he still listens to her concerns. Instead of ignoring her discomfort or trying to convince her, he reassures her by

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saying, “I want you to feel comfortable. We don’t have to go anywhere you’re not ready for.”

They both agree to end the night and go separate ways with some level of respect for each other, rather than tension and resentment.

If the story included a scene like this, my emotional response to the story would’ve been less uncomfortable because Margot wouldn’t have been in a situation where she wasn’t in control. This alternate scene highlights the difficulties of trying to communicate your feelings while also trying to be nice. This is a struggle that is common in modern dating. Additionally, this scene gives the reader a different view of the relationship dynamics between Robert and Margot. It highlights Margot’s ability to face tough situations and remove the pressure for her to hide her feelings of discomfort. This alternate scene would’ve left me with a feeling of empowerment and relief. Also, it would make Roberts’ character more complex. By having him respect her boundaries, the reader’s view of him would shift from a creepy guy into a more considerate guy. This shift would change the story’s main critique of modern dating culture into a more hopeful scenario where both people are given space to communicate openly, a stark contrast to the often unspoken misunderstandings that characterize digital dating.