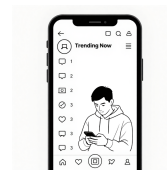


The Crisis of a Content Creator



Part 1: Read the Story

- (1) The morning in the "Content House" studio began not with the sun, but with the aggressive blue light of six different monitors. Harvey Maxwell, "Max Impact" to his followers, a man whose soul was defined by follower-counts, likes and shares, bypassed his morning coffee and went straight for the data.
- (2) Pitcher, his partner and cameraman, was already there. He looked like a man who had spent the night fighting a losing battle against algorithms.
- (3) "Reposts are down, Pitch," Maxwell snapped, his thumbs dancing across a tablet. "Our last video is not gaining traction. We're losing attention. The comments are calling us 'stale.' We need something big or else . . ."
- (4) He couldn't finish the words. "I have some thoughts on the edit—" Pitcher began.
- (5) "No time for edits. We need something new, something epic," Maxwell interrupted. He paced the small studio, stepping over tripod legs and tangled charging cables. "We need something life-changing. People love life-changing."
- (6) At a desk in the corner sat Leslie. She was a fellow creator, sharp-eyed and calm, currently busy scheduling posts for her own rapidly growing channel. She looked at Maxwell with a strange, guarded expression—a mix of pity and fascination.
- (7) "Morning, Harvey," she said.
- (8) Maxwell looked up, smiled, and started to reply, but then his phone pinged. It was an alert informing him that something negative had been posted about him somewhere online. "Sorry, Leslie," Maxwell started looking back at his phone, "I have to deal with this."
- (9) He rubbed his temples as if the answer could somehow be massaged out. "OK, I got it. Leslie, our cross-posted content has always done well. Pitch and I will set up a surprise marriage proposal video. You can pick the ring. Start looking. Maybe we can get a sponsor to fund it."
- (10) Leslie didn't look for a ring. She didn't look at Maxwell. She looked at Pitcher. Pitcher looked at his camera lens. Both were silent, wearing the expressions of people watching a train wreck in slow motion. "Look, Harvey, if you would just slow down and think for a minute . . ." she began.

(11) "I'll take care of the rest," Maxwell interrupted. "It is supposed to be a surprise after all. I know you can sell it. All our sponsors will want a piece of this." Pitcher shrugged and looked at Leslie with a sad expression.

(12) The morning became a fever dream of digital desperation. Maxwell was a whirlwind of frantic energy. "What do you mean you won't just give us the carriage ride? Don't you know how many of our followers will want to ride in the carriage I proposed to Leslie in?" "Look, I know mixed martial arts isn't a traditionally 'romantic' setting, but come on. It's giving a ring in a ring. What? It's called a cage? I still think it would work . . ." He shouted at the static repost count as if it were a disobedient pet. He was so consumed by the image of his life that he seemed to have forgotten he was actually living it.

(13) By noon, the "Proposal Strategy" was complete. Maxwell slammed his laptop shut and marched over to Leslie's desk. The frantic light in his eyes softened for a moment, replaced by a weary but earnest glimmer of love.

(14) "Leslie," he said, his voice dropping into the tone he usually reserved for "Serious Update" videos. He wasn't sure it was the right voice, but it was the best he had. "We've made great content together. This is the big thing we've been looking for. Let's make it official. Leslie... will you join me in a surprise marriage proposal video?"

(15) The studio went quiet. Even the hum of the cooling fans seemed to drop an octave. Leslie didn't look surprised. She looked tired. She slowly turned her monitor around so Maxwell could see the screen.

(16) "Harvey," she said, her voice dry as a desert. "I tagged you on this hours ago. Remember the livestream we did last night? I teased it for weeks, set it all up myself, and you agreed to it. It was a wedding ceremony, our wedding ceremony."

(17) Maxwell stared at the screen. There was a video of himself, in the very hoodie he was currently wearing, saying "I do" while simultaneously typing something on his phone. Right, he had been commenting on that post, or was it liking the video? Maybe it was responding to the sponsor. He couldn't actually remember what he was doing.

(18) "We've been married for several hours, Harvey," Leslie said, picking up her camera bag to leave. "The video already hit three million views. My stats have never been better. But you were so busy that you missed the fact that you were the main character."

Part 2: Annotating the Text

1. Place brackets [] around any text that show something about Maxwell's character.
2. Circle any words or phrases that show how Leslie and Pitcher are reacting to Maxwell.
3. Put an exclamation mark ! next to any moment when Maxwell's focus on his online life takes him away from his real life.

Part 3: Literary Analysis

Option 1: Character Analysis **Standards Focus:** *Character traits and response to plot events.*

Prompt: Examine how Harvey Maxwell's professional identity as "Max Impact" has overwritten his personal identity as a human being. Using the **brackets []** from your annotations, identify specific goals that drive his behavior.

Your Task: Write an analytical paragraph describing Maxwell's primary character traits. Explain how his reaction to "falling traction" and "stale comments" influences the way he treats the people in the room, specifically Leslie and Pitcher.

Option 2: Comparative Analysis **Standards Focus:** *Analyzing character interaction and contrasting points of view.*

Prompt: Analyze the contrast between Harvey Maxwell's internal reality and the external reality of those around him. Use your **circled annotations** to compare Max's frantic energy with the reactions of Pitcher and Leslie.

Your Task: Write a comprehensive analytical paragraph exploring the "emotional gap" in the studio. Explain why Pitcher and Leslie react with silence and "sad expressions" to Max's proposal strategy. How does Max's motivation to "save the channel" blind him to the human emotions clearly visible to everyone else in the room? Use at least two pieces of evidence from your circled annotations.

Option 3: Structural Analysis of Irony **Standards Focus:** *Analyzing structural elements, irony, and thematic development.*

Prompt: "The Crisis of a Content Creator" relies on **Situational Irony**—a discrepancy between what a character expects to happen and what actually occurs. Use your **exclamation marks (!)** to identify the moments where Max's digital obsession creates a "blind spot" in his life.

Your Task: Write a formal analytical paragraph regarding the story's resolution. Evaluate Leslie's final statement: "You missed the fact that you were the main character." Discuss how Max's habit of "multitasking" creates a critique of modern attention. Explain how this irony serves as a "life-changing event" far different from the one Max intended to film.

For all options you may use a CER (Claim, Evidence, Reasoning) or PEEL structure (Point, Evidence, Explanation, Link) if those are helpful.

Go to the next page to write your analysis for Part 3



Part 4: Evaluation

Not very good OK, but could have been better Good, solid work Some of my best

Exemplary	Insightful claim with specific textual evidence; reasoning clearly explains how the evidence connects to a broader understanding of character, contrast, or irony	100
Proficient	Clear claim with relevant textual evidence; reasoning connects evidence to the prompt in a logical way	90
Developing	General claim with some evidence; reasoning is present but doesn't fully explain the connection between evidence and claim	80
Beginning	Vague or missing claim; evidence is absent or not connected to a claim; response describes the story rather than analyzing it	70

Final Grade _____