VICKY DECKER'S SOCIAL ANXIETY PORTRAYED IN HOW TO DISAPPEAR BY SHARON HUSS ROAT

THESIS



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ABSTRACT

Zahro, A. (2020). Vicky Decker's Social Anxiety Portrayed in How to Disappear by Sharon Huss Roat. English Department, UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. Advisor: Sufi Ikrima Sa'adah, M.Hum.

Keywords: social anxiety, teenager, social media

This thesis aims to describe the symptoms of social anxiety experienced by the main character in *How to Disappear* novel. This thesis also shows the ways the main character gets help to deal with social anxiety. This thesis focuses on two research problems: (1) How are the symptoms of Vicky Decker's social anxiety depicted in *How To Disappear* novel?, (2) How do technology and Vicky Decker's peers help her deal with the social anxiety?

This study uses a qualitative method. It also used social anxiety theory, including social anxiety symptoms, to analyze the novel's main character. Besides, this study also found the relationship between technology use and the efforts in overcoming social anxiety in teenagers. The researcher found the quotations and narratives in the novel that appropriate with the theory base.

The researcher found that Vicky Decker, as the main character, experiences symptoms of social anxiety. The symptoms are fear of interaction, somatic symptoms (sweating, blushing, palpitations), behavioral symptoms (avoiding eye contact and facing others awkwardly), beliefs, negative thoughts, dwelling on the problem, having low self-confidence and self-esteem, avoiding classes, and social withdrawal. While dealing with her social anxiety, Vicky uses her ability to operate Adobe Photoshop to edit her photos to become someone else. As if being in any place she wants to be. Vicky also creates a new Instagram account using *Vicurious* as her name to share her photos and to interact with others freely and comfortably. Besides the technology use, Vicky's peers also play an essential role in helping Vicky deal with her social anxiety. Vicky has friends who accept her as the way she is and give her support every time she feels terrible because of her social anxiety. She also has a good quality of friendship with some of her peers.

ABSTRAK

Zahro, A. 2020. *Kecemasan Sosial Vicky Decker Digambarkan dalam How to Disappear oleh Sharon Huss Roat*. Program Studi Sastra Inggris, UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. Pembimbing: Sufi Ikrima Sa'adah, M.Hum.

Kata Kunci: kecemasan sosial, remaja, media sosial

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan gejala-gejala kecemasan sosial yang dialami oleh karakter utama dalam novel "How to Disappear". Penelitian ini juga menjelaskan tentang bagaimana karakter utama mendapatkan bantuan untuk menghadapi kecemasan sosial tersebut. Penelitian ini fokus pada dua rumusan masalah, (1) Bagaimana gejala kecemasan sosial Vicky Decker digambarkan dalam novel *How to Disappear*? (2) Bagaimana teknologi dan teman sebaya membantu Vicky Decker menghadapi kecemasan sosialnya?

Penelitian ini menggunakan sebuah pendekatan kualitatif. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori gejala-gejala kecemasan sosial termasuk gejala-gejalanya untuk menganalisa karakter utama dalam novel. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga menemukan hubungan antara penggunaan teknologi dengan upaya dalam mengatasi kecemasan sosial pada remaja. Peneliti menemukan kutipan-kutipan dan narasi-narasi pada novel yang sesuai dengan landasan teori.

Penelitian menemukan bahwa Vicky Decker sebagai karakter utama mengalami gejala-gejala kecemasan sosial. Diantaranya adalah, ketakutan berinteraksi, gejala somatik (berkeringat, wajah memerah, dan denyut jantung berlebihan), gejala tingkah laku (menghindari kontak mata, berhadapan dengan orang lain secara canggung), kepercayaan, pemikiran-pemikiran negatif, memikirkan masalah, memiliki kepercayaan diri yang rendah, menghindari kelas, serta penarikan sosial. Sedangkan untuk mengatasi kecemasan sosialnya, Vicky menggunakan kemampuannya untuk mengoperasikan Adobe Photoshop untuk mengedit foto-fotonya menjadi orang lain. Seolah berada di segala tempat yang ia inginkan. Ia juga membuat akun Instagram baru menggunakan nama Vicurious untuk membagikan foto-fotonya dan berinteraksi dengan orang lain secara bebas dan nyaman. Selain penggunaan teknologi, teman-teman sebaya Vicky juga memiliki peran penting dalam membantu Vicky mengatasi kecemasan sosialnya. Vicky memiliki teman yang menerima dia apa adanya serta memberikan dukungan setiap kali ia merasa buruk. Vicky juga memiliki kualitas hubungan perteman yang baik dengan beberapa teman sebayanya.

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Generally, every human being surely wants to live as quiet and peaceful without any problem and confusion. However, it is undeniable that every person has a matter or some problems in their life. Those matters and problems can be caused by any factor around them, such as friends, environment, job, family, and so on (Sarjono, 2016).

Adolescence has frequently considered a difficult time in life, consisting of stress and depression. It has been called a "period of great risk to healthy development" (Takanishi, 1993, p. 86). Teenagers endure *psychosocial* problems, which one of them is social anxiety during their development.

A social anxiety disorder differs from performance anxiety and shyness. It is in resultant distress and impairment, along with greater severity. People who have a social anxiety disorder may avoid important events and activities, such as attending meetings and classes. They achieve less in work and school, and they tend to get married than people who do not have this kind of disorder (Katzelnick et al., 2001). Adolescence is also a period where teenagers are prone to social anxiety because they have to adapt to a new environment such as school, attend classes, and deal with people

(Cunha, Guoveia, & Salvador, 2008).

In reducing social anxiety disorder, teenagers usually prefer dealing with people through technology over face-to-face. Social media such as Instagram, Twitter, and WhatsApp are on the rise among teenagers.

Teenagers once used social media to fulfill their need for learning new information and entertainment. Some research had reported that teenage girls tend to use social media to communicate with others than did boys (Lenhart, Madden, Hitlin, 2005). Teenage females feel more comfortable communicating with others as opposed to in person.

Henker, Whalen, Jamner, Delfino (2002), in their journal, found that teenagers expressed higher levels not only of anxiety and stress but also of sadness, fatigue, and anger. Nevertheless, they expressed lower levels of well-being and happiness. They reported fewer conversations and less recreational activity relative to achievement-oriented pursuits, more tobacco usage and smoking urges, and stronger eating. However, Pierce (2009) conducted anxiety's analysis by connecting social anxiety and technology. He found that female teenagers tended to use social sites and text messaging or cell phones rather than male teenagers. Besides, females reported that they felt more comfortable using *SITs* (Text Messaging and Online Social Sites) rather than talking with others face to face.

From the explanation above, the researcher is inspired to analyze social anxiety in teenage life from a novel entitled *How To Disappear* by Sharon Huss Roat. This novel is about the story of a teenage girl with social anxiety. As the main character, Vicky Decker, is a high school student who cannot adapt to the social situation. She always disappears in the bathroom when she cannot stand going to class and facing others. She also always spends her time in the bedroom instead of going outside and joining any social activity.

After looking at her friends' Instagram accounts, she is inspired to create an account using "Vicurious" as her user name and her Photoshoped photo as her profile. Sooner or later, she becomes famous and starts to talk with others online. Being "Vicurious" makes Vicky freer and more comfortable to deal with people. Besides the technology use, some of Vicky's peers have a significant role in overcoming social anxiety.

Looking at the behavior of the main character related to Pierce's journal (2009), the researcher assumes that Vicky's problem is appropriate to analyze social anxiety and technology. It is because technology has a significant role for those who have social anxiety. It makes them more comfortable communicating without facing social situations they fear (Erwin et al., 2004).

Many researchers have discussed the issue of social anxiety in literary work and the social aspect. The researcher had found three relevant studies. First, Riswahyudi (2017) conducted research entitled *Social Anxiety*Disorder of the Main Character in Shopie Kinsella's Finding Audrey Novel.

Second, Hidayati (2010) analyzed the relation and level of self-esteem and social anxiety of early teenagers in her thesis entitled Hubungan antara self-esteem dengan social anxiety remaja awal siswa kelas VII SMP terpadu Al-Anwar Trenggalek. Third, Azka, Firdaus, & Kurniadewi (2018) analyzed college students' social anxiety and its effects on social media addiction in their journal entitled Kecemasan Sosial dan Ketergantungan Media Sosial pada Mahasiswa.

This current study is different from the previous studies, which have been explained above. This study is stressed on a deep analysis of the main character's social anxiety in *How To Disappear* novel. The researcher also wants to reveal the role of technology and peers' help reduce the main character's social anxiety. This research has two problems of study which will be discussed, they are; (1) How are the symptoms of Vicky Decker's social anxiety depicted in *How To Disappear* novel?, (2) How do technology and Vicky Decker's peers help her deal with the social anxiety?

1.2 Objective of the Study

Refer to the problems above. This study has objectives as follows:

- a. To describe the symptoms of Vicky Decker's social anxiety in *How To Disappear* novel.
- b. To describe the role of technology and peers in helping Vicky deal with social anxiety.

1.3 Scope and Limitation

This research focuses on the main character in *How To Disappear* novel by Sharon Huss Roat, Vicky, who experiences anxiety with unfamiliar people. In comparison, the limitation focuses on Vicky's anxiety, especially her social anxiety. In other words, this research is aimed to discuss Vicky Decker's symptoms of social anxiety and the role of technology and peers in helping her deal with social anxiety.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The researcher expects that this research can benefit both theoretically and practically to the readers and the researcher. Theoretically, this research is expected to give a deeper understanding of teenagers' social anxiety.

Practically, this research is expected to make readers aware of how serious social anxiety. Thus, the researcher hopes that the readers will give place and support to those around them who show the symptoms of social

anxiety.

This research is also expected to inspire others, especially for the English Department's students of State Islamic University of Sunan Ampel Surabaya, who will conduct the same issue in other literary works.

1.5 Research Method

The researcher discusses the research design, data source, data collection, and data analysis in this sub-chapter. The methods of this research are explained below.

1.5.1 Research Design

This research used qualitative methods. Bogdan and Biklen (1982) stated that qualitative study is descriptive in which all the data is collected in words or pictures rather than numbers. Data with quotes from field notes, documents, and novels were used to present the research findings.

1.5.2 Data Source

The data in this research were words, phrases, conversations, and narratives in *How To Disappear* novel by Sharon Huss Roat, which indicated the main character's social anxiety issue and how she used technology to overcome social anxiety. Besides the novel as the primary data source, the researcher used the secondary data source. It was outside of

the story, such as textbooks, journals, thesis, theory books, internet sources, etc.

1.5.3 Data Collection

In collecting data, the researcher followed some procedures:

- 1. The researcher read the novel deeply to understanding the story and the issues it.
- 2. The researcher determined the quotations relevant to the social anxiety of the main character and how she deals with her social anxiety. The quotations were in the form of phrases, sentences, dialogues, and narratives.
- 3. The researcher categorized the data based on the research questions.

1.5.4 Data Analysis

After doing the data collection, the researcher analyzed the data with several steps as follows:

- 1. The researcher exposed the data to find the issues.
- 2. The researcher gave the data labels to recognize social anxiety and how to deal with it in the story.
- 3. The researcher collected the data that had been labeled according to the symptoms of social anxiety, the technology used in overcoming social anxiety, and peers' role.

- 4. The researcher analyzed the data.
- 5. The researcher concluded.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

• Social Anxiety : is a constant fear of social situations where

shame may happen, and the anxiety is not

comparable to the actual threat caused by the

social situations ((ICD-10) (WHO, 2008)).

• Teenagers : Can be called as Adolescence. It is the

transitional stage from childhood to adulthood

which historically occurs between ages of 12 and

18 (Jaworska & MacQueen, 2015).

Social Media : Are interactive computer-mediated technologies

which facilitate the sharing or creation of ideas,

career interest, information, and other expression

forms via networks and virtual communities

(Manning, 2014).

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CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter discusses the theory used in this research: social anxiety, the phenomenology of social anxiety in teenagers, technology use, and the peers' role. The explanation of each theory is described below.

2.1 Social Anxiety

Social anxiety, or previously called social phobia, was officially stated as a separate phobic disorder in the mid-1960s (Marks & Gelder, 1965). As specified in the *International Classification of Disease*, 10th Revision (ICD-10) (World Health Organization, 2008), social anxiety disorder is a constant fear of social situations where shame may happen. The anxiety is not comparable to the actual threat caused by social conditions. While in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder 5th Edition* (DSM-V), social anxiety disorder is signed by a constant and persuasive fear in performance and social situations.

The specific performance or social situations can be classified into interaction, supervision, and performance. These include meeting new people, starting a conversation, speaking in meetings and groups, going to school, working, being seen in public, and using public facilities. According to Ernest ed. (2012), people with social anxiety disorder worry that they will say or do something they think will be embarrassing or humiliating, such as sweating,

shaking, blushing, looking anxious, or stupid. But the hardest thing for people who suffer from social anxiety is fear, which is sometimes excessive and illogical. The negative and illogical thoughts of social situations prevent them from interacting with others and participating in social activities. As a result, these people appear to be uninterested in social relations (Stemberger, Turner, Beidel, & Calhoun, 1995).

Common characteristics of people who have a social anxiety disorder are shyness, poor achievement, low self-esteem, and little social support (Antony & Swinson, 2008). However, in social anxiety disorder, the shyness is much more paralyzing and can bother with most areas of life (Jefferson, 2001). Those areas include the economic and educational worlds. The problems of unemployment and retirement commonly happen to people with social anxiety (Wittchen & Beloch 1996). While the educational accomplishment of children and teenagers with social anxiety can be bothered by leaving school earlier and getting worse qualifications (Van Ameringen, Mancini, & Farvolden, 2003).

2.1.1 Social Anxiety in Teenagers

Children and teenagers may manifest their anxiety a little differently from adults. Social anxiety in teenagers can be a permanent disorder if it has never been treated properly (Davis, 2012). Critical social disorders mostly occur between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five, in both males and females (Piet,

Hougaard, Hecksher, Rosenberg, 2010).

2.1.2 Symptoms of Social Anxiety

Teenagers who experience social anxiety commonly show some symptoms as below.

2.1.2.1 Fear of Interaction

Holt, Heimberg, & Hope (cited in Tillfors, 2001) found that the extent of situations which are feared by those with social anxiety disorder revolves from fear of discrete setting such as performing on stage to a fear of all forms of interpersonal communication. Generally, they fear and worry about some social situations. Public speaking tends to be the most frequently feared social situation, followed by other conditions such as social events (e.g., festivals and parties), meetings, and interacting with strangers (Rapee & Heimberg, 1997).

2.1.2.2 Fear Response

2.1.2.2.1 Somatic Symptoms

Most people who have social anxiety experience somatic symptoms, even though some experiences only fear and self-consciousness without somatic symptoms. Some somatic symptoms such as trembling, sweating, muscle tension, and palpitations are general to social anxiety and other anxiety disorders. These symptoms usually are related to performance or social situations (du Toit

and Stein, 2007).

2.1.2.2.2 Behavioral Symptoms

Evasion behaviors are frequently the greatest source of interference in social anxiety disorder and range from safety behavior in relatively subtle situations such as avoiding eyes contact, to avoiding all forms of interpersonal contact or communication outside the close family of the person with a social anxiety disorder (du Toit & Stein, 2007).

2.1.2.3 Beliefs

According to Wells, White, & Carter (1997), in a person who experiences social anxiety; the thing that may play an essential role in developing and maintaining the social anxiety process is emotional belief. Sometimes, these beliefs are about the person itself, and the greatest problem is still the fear of being rejected or being judge crudely by others. Werner, Goldin, Ball, Heimberg, & Gross (2011) argued that a person who experiences social anxiety struggles in expressing their emotional experiences.

2.1.2.4 Negative Thoughts

People who experience social anxiety disorder particularly have three different types of cognitions: worries and obsessions; rapid negative thoughts; and negative automatic thoughts (Beck, Emery & Greenberg, 1985). Worry is

defined as a mind chain aimed at problem-solving, sometimes accompanied by feelings of anxiety or distress. Besides, Watson & Friend (cited in Alkhathami, 2015, p. 34) identified other cognitions that are usually experienced by people with social anxiety. They found that this group of people feared negative assessment from others because feeling compelled to presents themselves more acceptably; the effort was frequently excessive.

2.1.2.5 Dwelling on the Problem

Social anxiety can occur anytime; it is partly because of the others' behaviors that cannot be predicted and some others because of the fear may occur unexpectedly. The anticipation of the people who experience social anxiety in not getting too involved in a problem is to think about what should be done if there is a problem later. Fear and anxiety make people difficulty seeing into the future, participating in some activities, and enjoying every activity (Hidayati, 2012).

2.1.2.6 Having Low Self Confidence and Self Esteem

People with social anxiety are always thinking negatively about anything, including themselves, such as feeling worse than others, strange, and unworthy. So, it will affect their self-esteem and self-confidence. Those people will feel inferior and do not want to get along with others because they think other people

do not like them (Hidayati, 2012).

2.1.3 Phenomenology of Social Anxiety in Teenagers

The main fear of those who experience social anxiety disorder is social evaluation and negative expectations related to being evaluated and scrutinized. This negative evaluation is commonly associated with an individual's anxiety symptoms and the individual's appearance or certain behavioral manifestations (Alkhathami, 2015, p. 45).

2.1.3.1 Avoiding Classes

Social anxiety is seen to interfere with the daily life of the individuals who experience it, and it has been observed that it is related to the substantial impairment (Essau, Conradt, & Petermann, 1999; Wittchen, Stein, & Kessler, 1999). Van Roy et al., and Van Ameringen et al. (cited in Alkhathami, 2015, p. 46) stated that under-achievement and coming out of school early had been a particular concern among children and teenagers with social anxiety. Short-term and long-term refusal in attending classes is a normal case among them. Beidel, Turner, & Morris (1999) argued that children or teenagers with social anxiety disorder tend to have some friends and are more likely to avoid school activities.

2.1.3.2 Age of Onset

The age of onset of social anxiety has been detected in late adolescence

or early adulthood (Amies, Gelder, & Shaw, 1983). Yet, Wittchen and Beloch (1996) found that social anxiety mostly starts during childhood and early adolescence. Research on adolescents indicated that social anxiety is increasingly recognized as an important disorder among human beings (Olivares, Gracia-Lopez, Hidalgo, & Caballo, 2004). Also, Albano (cited in Heimberg, Liebowitz, Hope, & Schneier, 1995, p. 387-425) found that this disorder is most frequently diagnosed in teenagers.

2.1.3.3 Shyness and Social Anxiety

Shyness has a significant effect on someone's daily life situations. It can indicate a person's despair and submission in response to aggression and authoritarianism. Shyness can also result from a passive mental reaction, restricting the freedom of a person's behavior, and damaging self-esteem (Henderson & Zimbardo, 2010, p. 6). Besides, Henderson and Zimbardo (2010) found that shy people are sometimes becoming socially anxious and developing their social anxiety in their daily life situations. Furthermore, they are not interested in communicating positively or taking part effectively in social activities. These researchers showed a strong relationship between shyness and social anxiety, with people who experience social anxiety showing negative mindset, painful emotion, and inhibited behaviors. They assumed these symptoms are psychological disorders and social anxiety as a severe problem

affecting the patients' reactions, making them think that they are socially ignored, passive, and helpless in their lives.

2.1.3.4 Social Withdrawal

Social withdrawal is defined as eschewing from any social activities and events when other peers attend (Rubin et al., 2006). Mostly the person prefers to withdraw from others rather than being isolated or rejected. Yet, evidence also shows that children or teenagers who are socially withdrawn become targets of negative treatment and can be victimized by their peers.

2.2 Reducing Social Anxiety

Slightly different from an anxiety disorder, people with social anxiety have their way of dealing with social anxiety. As some researchers (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, and Zickuhr, 2010; Greco and Morris, 2005; Van Zalk & Van Zalk, 2015; Cavanaugh and Buehler, 2016) have found below.

2.2.1 Social Anxiety and Technology Use

Over the last year, the internet had profoundly affected our lives, mainly how we communicate with each other. Although the internet commonly uses as a medium of communication, it may have importance for someone with social anxiety because the internet provides opportunities for unstressful interaction (Caplan, 2007).

2.2.1.1 Social Media Use

Social networking sites such as Facebook and Instagram can give ample opportunities, especially in interaction with others. For people who experience social anxiety, social media use had an essential contribution to mental health. With social media, a person with social anxiety can freely interact with others without feeling pressured or anxious (Rosen LD, Whaling K, Rab S, 2013). Lenhart et al. (2010) found that adolescence is connected with a significant increment in social media use. Over 80% of teenagers and young adults in the United States use social networking sites, including Instagram. They tend to use social media rather than interact directly to reduce anxiety and discomfort in face-to-face situations.

2.2.2 The Role of Peers

In addition to social media use, peers' role also contributes to reducing social anxiety.

2.2.2.1 Peer Acceptance

Greco and Morris (2005, p. 197) had to define peer acceptance as "the extent to which someone is noticed or like by their peers." Some research has found a significant correlation between peer acceptance and social anxiety

disorder. Grills-Taquechel, Norton, & Ollendick (2010) found that social acceptance felt by someone significantly and uniquely predicted teenagers' social anxiety two years later with higher social acceptance from their peers and friends associated with a decrease in social anxiety at the age of 13-14 years.

2.2.2.2 Quality of Friendship

Van Zalk & Van Zalk (2015) found that teenagers who were chosen more like a close friend experience social anxiety over time. Besides, gender was a significant moderator in this friend relationship. Females who were selected as friends tend not to experience increased social anxiety, but relative to males. Furthermore, Van Zalk & Van Zalk (2015) also found that friends' care mediated the relation between being chosen as a friend and social anxiety. Teenagers who were more cared for by their friends were less likely to experience increased social anxiety symptoms.

2.2.2.3 Peer Support

Cavanaugh and Buehler (2016) have explored the relationship between a cumulative social support source and teenagers' social anxiety disorder. They reported that parents, peers, and teachers' support was connected with anxiety's decrease in early adolescence. Besides, Hutcherson and Epkins (2009) researched social anxiety interpersonal correlations associated with parents and

peers. They found that close friend and classmate support were significantly correlated with decreased social anxiety as reported by teenagers themselves.

2.3 Previous Studies

Riswahyudi (2017) researched the social anxiety disorder of the main character in Sophie Kinsella's *Finding Audrey*. In his research, Riswahyudi (2017) analyzed and discussed the main character's social anxiety, the factors of it, and how the main character overcome social anxiety. As the result, Riswahyudi (2017) found that the main character has social anxiety when she has to deal with strangers. While there are two factors of the main character's social anxiety. The main factor is the bullying experience that makes her get a deep trauma. Besides, the main character's introvert is the other factor that makes her unable to face social conditions. However, in reducing her social anxiety, the main character asks for a therapist's help.

Hidayati (2012) conducted quantitative research by analyzing the relation and level of early teenagers' self-esteem and social anxiety. Her research respondents are 102 7th-grade students at Junior High School of Terpadu Al-Anwar, Trenggalek. She used two scales of data instrument; self-esteem scale and social anxiety scale. Her research findings show that self-esteem is mostly in the low category; there are 65 students (63,72%). While social anxiety levels are mostly in the high category, there are 52 (50,98%) students. Based on the

correlation analysis result of *product-moment* correlation test obtained rxy = -0,533 and p = 0,000. Her research shows that there is a negative relationship between self-esteem and social anxiety. She argued that the higher the level of self-esteem, the lower the level of social anxiety. Otherwise, the lower the self-esteem level, the higher the social anxiety level.

Azka, Firdaus, & Kurniadewi (2018) analyzed college students' social anxiety and its effects on social media addiction. The correspondents of their research were 342 students of State Islamic University of Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. They found that social anxiety influences social media addiction to college students, with an influence of 7,2%. They concluded that most of the participants experience social anxiety and social media addiction.

From the three studies conducted above, many researchers were discussing social anxiety. But mostly, they did not analyze social anxiety in literary work. So that the researcher intends to explore social anxiety in the fictional character of a novel. The researcher chooses the main character in *How To Disappear* novel, Vicky Decker. This research analyzes the main character's social anxiety that is depicted in the novel. It also examines how the character deals with her social anxiety.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS

This chapter focuses on describing the two research problems which were described in the previous chapter. First, it describes the social anxiety that Vicky Decker experiences in *How To Disappear* novel. Second, it describes how Vicky deals with her social anxiety.

Vicky Decker is a student of Richardson High School. She had a best friend since she was five named Jenna. They were always together when they were at school and home. It made Vicky did not need to face social condition around her lonely. Jenna always helped her to talk with others when she had no courage to do it. Even if somebody asked her, then Jenna would answer for her.

For pretty much as long as I can remember, Jenna has been the only person I ever really talk to. When it comes to communicating with anyone else, she has always spoken for both of us. Even if someone directs their question to me. I hesitate, and she jumps in to answer. It's just the way we are (p. 2).

When Jenna moved to Wisconsin, Vicky had to go to school and face social conditions around her without the "shield." It made her feel anxious and fearful. Even when Vicky cannot deal with her anxiety, she hides in the school bathroom and spends her time inside the toilet. Besides hiding, Vicky experiences social anxiety symptoms when facing people and social conditions around her.

3.1 Vicky Decker's Social Anxiety

In the last few chapters of *How To Disappear* novel, Vicky Decker is diagnosed with social anxiety after seeing the school counselor. "She gives me a pamphlet on social anxiety. A quick flip through it is like reading my résumé. "You can share this with your parents," she says." (p. 226). The phrase "it is like reading my resume" implies that Vicky experiences whatever the pamphlet says. Thus, this quote provides information that Vicky has social anxiety.

However, before everyone realizes that Vicky has social anxiety, she has symptoms that commonly happen to someone who experiences social anxiety. Based on the kinds of symptoms described in the previous chapter, the researcher found that these symptoms also happened to Vicky Decker.

3.1.1 Fear of Interaction

Vicky admitted that she is afraid of people and of being surrounded by them. She felt the need to hide somewhere that kept her away from the crowd and a place where people could not see her. "Sometimes I am so scared of people, of being around people, that I have to hide. In the bathroom or, or . . . behind shrubbery or something" (p. 221).

Even when she is at school, Vicky never dared to communicate with the students around her. She also often had excessive fear when her teacher told her to come to the front of the class or just raised her hand when she wanted to

answer her teacher's question.

Meanwhile, I am paralyzed by the dueling fears of raising my hand to answer a question in class and being left with the dreaded first slot on the schedule. Giving a presentation at all is terrifying. Going first? Just kill me now (p. 124).

Vicky has excessive fear just because she has to raise her hand and answer questions to determine the order in which she should present the result of her project. Besides, rather than giving a presentation in the first sequence, she would rather "die." It means Vicky will feel very depressed, and she does not want to stand in front of her friends who watch her giving presentations and talk to them.

After Vicky had her turn to present her project's result and the day comes when she has to do it, she suddenly has a panic attack.

.....but then I remember what I'm about to do, and time starts to move really slowly. The roar comes back to my ears and takes on a slow-mo sound, the vacuum cleaners dropping to a lower pitch. My footsteps reverberate through the room with a thud . . . thud . . . thud . I can see every face, every smirk, every snicker as if captured on video and played back with a heavy hand on the pause button. I'm pretty sure I've stopped breathing entirely (p. 224).

From the quotation above, it can be seen that Vicky experiences excessive panic attacks, which makes her feel like everything moves slowly. Besides, she hears a roar loudly comes into her ears, making her unable to look around. Vicky

imagines her friends' faces intimidate and grin at her. Even before she starts thinking about what she should be doing that day and seeing her classmates' faces, Vicky is already experiencing anxiety and excessive panic until she feels that she has stopped breathing. Then she returns to reality when her classmate whispers her name and says that she can start the presentation. After getting some favors from her classmate, Vicky can finally present her project. Only people with social anxiety experience this fear when they face social situations around them, just like Holt et al. (1992) had stated that people with social anxiety are generally scared of some social situations, including having a presentation in front of the class. The scare sometimes makes the sufferers have difficulty breathing and abnormally heart beating.

Besides being afraid of situations that require sufferers to interact in public, interacting interpersonally with strangers is also avoided by people with social anxiety (Holt et al., 1992). In this novel, Vicky, several times, faced situations that cause her to interact with strangers. Unfortunately, she shows reactions such as panic and worries, which are excessive and unreasonable." I'm nervous taking my haul up to the counter because I'm always nervous at checkout counters.

Sometimes the clerks are chatty ..." (p. 44). Vicky always feels nervous when dealing with clerks because she thinks that they still talk a lot. Vicky avoids conversations, especially with strangers. Compared to people who do not have

social anxiety, a conversation is ordinary, and there is no need to feel nervous.

However, Vicky always feels nervous about things she should not be.

Besides clerks, Vicky also reacts much worse when she faces a shoe guy at the bowling alley.

He and Surly Shoe Guy both look to me then. The noise drowning everything else outfalls away and I am suddenly on display. All my anxiety comes rushing back, and I'm convinced that I will say the wrong thing even if all they want from me is my shoe size. *It will be the wrong shoe size*. I'm sure of it (p. 178).

When Vicky went to the bowling alley with Lipton, they were required to change their shoes with particular shoes before entering the area. Vicky then gave an extreme reaction when the shoe guy asked about the shoe size Vicky was wearing. Instead of answering correctly, Vicky felt panic as if the crowd drowned her. She was also very sure that she would pronounce the wrong measurement before she even said it. Looking at Vicky's behavior, Lipton asked her to go home or do something else. However, Vicky said that she would wear those shoes. Still dealing with the shoe guy, Vicky continued to stay silent and fought with her panic." But I don't move, because I can't, because the shoe guy is judging me. I can only stand there hovering behind Lipton, avoiding eye contact with anyone who might look at me funny. Which is everyone" (p. 178-179). The fear of strangers messes with Vicky. She could not even move

and chose to hide behind Lipton because she felt the shoe guy's gaze judging her; even the truth is, he only asked about her shoe size. Apart from that, Vicky also thinks everyone was paying attention to her silliness, making her even more panicked. After facing the shoe guy, finally, Vicky and Lipton got their shoes and played Bowling.

3.1.2 Somatic Symptoms

For people who experience social anxiety-like Vicky, somatic symptoms such as excessive sweating, trembling, and palpitations in social situations are frequent (du Toit and Stein, 2007). In this novel, Vicky frequently shows these symptoms when dealing with the social conditions around her. "Standing by my locker, I can already feel the sweat circles forming on my T-shirt" (p. 1).

At the beginning of the story, the researcher found that Vicky experiences the somatic symptom of sweating just because she is at school without Jenna, her best friend, which means that she has to face every situation there by herself. Being at school without her best friend is what makes Vicky feel worried and sweaty quickly. The night before, she talked to her best friend over the phone, who told her to talk to her other school friends. To fulfill her best friend's request, Vicky tries to talk to Hallie Bryce, one of the famous students at Richardson High School." I clear my throat to make sure it's still working, and that's when I spot Hallie's gloriously perfect dancer bun gliding down the hall

toward me. Immediately, my pulse is pounding in my ears" (p. 3). Instead of talking to Hallie, Vicky even shows an exaggerated reaction when she sees Hallie walking towards her standing. Vicky is so nervous that she feels her pulse reach her ears. Instead of talking to Hallie, Vicky was just whispering the word "Hi" to Hallie and reflexively putting her head down.

Apart from meeting and trying to talk to Hallie, Vicky feels her heartbeats abnormally and very fast when she tries to talk to her other classmate. "My heart is pounding so hard now, and the roar in my ears is so loud, I'm not even sure what he just said or if I heard him right" (p. 112). The quote shows Vicky's somatic symptom when she is trying to communicate with one of her classmates. Here, her classmate invites her to go to his house, causing Vicky to panic. Her heart also beats very fast, and she seems to hear painful sounds in her brain.

If meeting and talking to one person makes Vicky experiences somatic symptoms of social anxiety such as sweating and palpitations, speaking in front of people makes her feel much worse.

Hi! Hey! How's it going? Here to work on the yearbook? Of course, you are—stupid question. I mean, why else would you be here. Right?" Oh, God. Their eyes go wide. My heart nearly pounds through my chest and smacks them in the face. Marvo glances at Beth Ann and back at me. "She speaks" (p. 59).

Vicky unconsciously talks so much with two of her friends, who both work as Yearbook staff at her school. When she realizes that they are shocked by what

Vicky had just done, speaking in complete sentences, Vicky immediately feels her heart beats as if it hits her chest so hard and something punches in her face harder.

Besides Hallie Bryce, Marvo, and Beth Ann, Vicky also panics and shows sweating somatic symptoms when talking to other Richardson High School students. For example, when she tries to talk to Lipton Gregory, "I, uh . . . wasn't . . ." I shake my head. Why am I talking? I'm causingunnecessary sweating here" (p. 22). In that situation, Lipton was the first who spoke to Vicky. However, she still felt nervous, and she stuttered and sweat suddenly.

This somatic symptom is also usually accompanied by excessive palpitations. "Raise your hand if you want the topic, and you can form a group with the others who want that topic, too." My heart rate has doubled at this point, and I can feel the sweat circles forming" (p. 23). When Mr. Braxley announces that there will be a group project in World History class, Vicky realizes that it will make her interact with people in a group more often. However, before she gets the topic and the group that will work with her, she already had somatic social anxiety symptoms, sweating, and heart beats faster than usual.

Another somatic symptom of sweating that Vicky experienced was when she tried to talk to one of the girls' school. Even though she did not know about this girl, she had to do it because she wanted to defend Lipton, who was always

teased by the girl. It took Vicky so much effort to fight her fear of talking to other people. She felt her sweat pouring down and felt as if her stomach had been twisting. "His name is Lipton," I say, trembling under her glare. I can feel my sweat starting and my stomach twisting in knots. My voice is shaking, but I keep going" (p. 198).

Not only when dealing with people, someone with social anxiety like

Vicky can also sweat and tremble when she thinks of something terrible, which

does not necessarily happen to her. "I start sweating, the room spinning. I don't

have a paper bag, so I cup my hands and breathe into them, sitting at my desk

chair to drop my head between my knees" (p. 170). Vicky feels a great panic and

fear, which makes her start sweating, and it gives an effect as if all the properties

in her room are spinning. It makes her feel nauseous because she thinks she will

be surrounded by people who will embarrass her later when she goes to a

concert with Lipton.

Apart from sweating, blushing is also a somatic symptom that often happens to people with social anxiety. People who do not experience this phobia will be blushing when they are really in a condition that makes them embarrassed. It is different from social anxiety sufferers. They will experience this somatic symptom more often when they are in any social situation. "I blush, absolutely mortified that someone was listening to my babbling enough to quote it back to

me. And remembered to do so a whole day later" (p. 12). Vicky feels embarrassed because Lipton said something to her about her chattering. She thought this was enough to make her very ashamed because she did not expect somebody to hear her chattering.

Vicky also felt like her face was burning when somebody looked at her closely. "...when the door to the yearbook office opens and Marissa's head pops out, inches from mine. "There you are. Are you coming in?" The temperature of my face rises about a thousand degrees. I didn't even think to knock" (p. 34). When Marissa, the school yearbook staff leader, suddenly opened the door and appeared in front of Vicky, who was so close to her, Vicky felt that her face was burning because she did not expect that Marissa would suddenly appear before her. Vicky did not know if Marissa had been waiting for her in the room. She did not even want to knock on the door until Marissa met her in the school hallway.

The same thing happens when another yearbook staff is talking about Vicky but not in the wrong context. "They *all* turn and look at me. "You're a Photoshop genius?" asks Marissa. "Uhh . . ." I shake my head, face burning" (p.76-77). The situation happens when all the school yearbook staff discuss the new edition of the school yearbook's content. Suddenly, they looked at Vicky. Marissa thought that Vicky was an expert in Photoshop. Although this is true, Vicky refused to admit it. Instead, she felt like her face was burning because everyone was

watching her. Whereas Marissa only asked about her skills in Photoshop, not embarrassing her.

Vicky often overreacts to everything that happens to her, such as when everyone is watching or looking at her. If people do not have social anxiety, this thing will not have a disproportionate effect on them.

Mr. Braxley answers in the affirmative, and then he and every single other person in the room stare at me. I don't move. I really want to. There is nothing I want more than to be gone from this room, but I am momentary "deer in headlights" frozen (p. 24).

While the class was in progress, suddenly, someone came into the classroom and talked to Mr. Braxley to send Vicky into the guidance room. Vicky, who was initially not paying attention and just focusing on herself, suddenly felt paralyzed—realizing that Mr. Braxley and the rest of the class watching her make her want to disappear from the class. However, instead of moved from her seat, Vicky felt this heart and pulse had stopped working; she froze.

3.1.3 Behavioral Symptoms

Besides the somatic symptoms, people with social anxiety also always show behavioral symptoms, just like avoiding eye contact and interpersonal communication, stuttering, and acting awkward when facing others (du Toit & Stein, 2007). Vicky Decker often avoids all forms of communication and other

social actions. She also frequently acts *silly* when she faces situations that require her to talk.

I get the sense you're having some trouble," she says after a while. "Would you like to talk about it?" I pause. This is my opening. I could tell her everything right now. Maybe it would help. But all I say is, "No, thank you" (p. 115).

The quotation above shows that Vicky avoided a long conversation. She could have discussed what she was feeling with the school counselor, Mrs. Greene. However, interpersonal communication is what Vicky Decker avoids the most. She does not want to talk at length, and other people just listen and pay attention. This will only make Vicky panic. That is why Vicky prefers to keep everything she wanted to tell Mr. Greene and refused interpersonal conversation by saying, "No, thank you." Although Mrs. Greene is true to her word, it does not make Vicky tell her everything in her mind. Then Vicky is just sitting and breathing with her eyes closed. She is just tired. It takes all her energy to make sure her mom and everyone that she is fine.

"I throw my eyes to the floor. Forget saying hi. It's all I can do *not* to hyperventilate" (p. 3). When Vicky tries to fight her fear of speaking and realizes that it is embarrassing, she will quickly avoid making eye contact with her partner. As in the quotation above, when she tried to greet Hallie Bryce and thought it could only embarrass her, she immediately lowered his head and

refused to look at Hallie.

"Lipton clears his throat, and I turn my face a teensy bit more in his direction without establishing eye contact. "Frankenstein," he says. "Excuse me?" I shoot him a quick glance, then eyes to the floor" (p. 12). Even though Vicky realized that Lipton cleared his throat because he wanted to say something to her, she refused to look at Lipton. Then Lipton spoke of something that surprised her, and she immediately looked at Lipton spontaneously. When Vicky realized that she was saying something and looking at someone, she directly looked at the floor and avoided Lipton's eye contact.

To put her head down while in a public place or in the classroom is Vicky's habit. She does this because she is afraid that someone will look at her and start talking to her or just greeting her.

I use all of the first period to study for my precalc test, which is the next period, and also thankfully means I won't have to talk to anybody. I can put my head down and just do the work. That's pretty much how I spend the rest of the day. Head down. Going to class. Doing the work (p. 7).

When I get to world history, I'm just hoping I can put my head down and do my work and be left alone (p. 74).

Vicky prefers to spend all the time at school studying or doing something. She does this because she avoids an interaction or does not want someone to talk to her, which is what Vicky hoped for. Vicky kept her head down all day long,

whether she was walking in the school hallway or when she got to her seat. This kind of behavior is common among people with social anxiety (du Toit & Stein, 2007).

Apart from avoiding direct communication or interaction by putting her head down, Vicky always chooses not to be in a place where people are usually there. "By 3:57, I'm on the bus and slinking into my usual seat (the one over the hump of the tire where nobody else ever wants to sit)" (p. 7). It shows that Vicky prefers to sit alone on the school bus and prefers a place where other students never chose that place to be occupied. She does this so that no other student would sit with her and talk to her.

Even if Vicky is forced to speak in certain situations, she will act silly or awkward.

"I, uh . . . yes. Here's your drumstick. I caught it. Self-defense, of course, totally. You could put an eye out with that thing. But here you go. All yours now. Happy to be of service." Oh my God. *Happy to be of service?* Did I actually say that out loud? The word-spew is an occasional side effect of never speaking to anyone. It's like my brain stores up every ridiculous thought I've ever had, and then projectile vomits it all over the place (p. 5).

When she was walking in the school hallway, she accidentally nudged Adrian, who is very popular in Richardson High School. He is the drummer for a local band called East 48. At that time, Adrian was carrying a drum stick. When Vicky

nudged him, the drumstick automatically escaped Adrian's grip and made it float above Vicky's head. Reflexively Vicky caught it. This, of course, made Adrian amazed by Vicky's action. Realizing that someone is talking to her and that person is a well-known student at her school makes Vicky embarrassed. She even spoke in full sentences but with words that she thought so ridiculous. She even admits that sometimes she said silly things as an effect of never talking to anyone.

Smile, Vicky. Smile. I pull my lips into a shape that reveals my teeth but isn't exactly a smile. It likely resembles the face I make in the dentist's chair when the hygienist is taking X-rays. My eyes are watering, too. Because I keep forgetting to blink. Blink. Blink. Blink (p. 111).

Apart from saying things that she thinks are ridiculous, Vicky also did something that made her awkward. When Lipton started talking to her, she reacted to an awkward behavior, like she should smile naturally when she saw Lipton laughing and smiling at her. She even forgot to blink because she was too focused on her thoughts.

Stuttering and not controlling the knees bobbing up and down when speaking are also the behavioral symptoms of people with social anxiety. "But I couldn't . . . I, you know." My face contorts, and my hands wave around my head in what my screwed-up brain apparently thinks is an acceptable form of communication" (p. 97). Here, Vicky was having a hard time finishing her

sentence while talking to Lipton. She even thought hard to find the right and acceptable way of communicating with him. She had spoken to Lipton many times before, but she still stuttered when Lipton asked her.

If talking with a classmate makes Vicky feel terrible, talking with a school counselor made her feel worse. When she was ordered to see Mrs. Greene and talking to her, Vicky experienced knees tremble. Even though she tried to sound relaxed when she spoke, the rest of Vicky's body could not hide her panic. "Yes, fine." I try to make my voice calm and unshaky, but my knee keeps bobbing up and down. I force it to stop with the palm of my hand" (p. 25).

3.1.4 Beliefs

Vicky often thinks that someone or everyone in her school will embarrass or laugh at her whenever they notice her. She even thought she would be rejected if she wanted to hang out with them just because she feels freak. "Oh, God. I can't go on this date. What was I thinking, saying yes to a concert where I'll be surrounded? Crowds are the absolute worst. So many people, so many opportunities to humiliate myself" (p. 170). Lipton asked Vicky to come with him to the East 48 concert, and she said yes. When the day finally came, Vicky had a panic attack. She thought that she should not accept Lipton's request because going to a concert was like getting herself into trouble. She was afraid that the people around her would humiliate and insult her, even though this will

not necessarily happen. We know that people who watch concerts will only focus on music, but Vicky has a negative thought.

"I spend most of the bus ride worrying that someone will laugh at my stupid juice box" (p. 74). Another fear of being laugh at is when Vicky sat on the school bus. Before going to school, Vicky's mother always prepared her lunch. At that time, her lunch was a granola bar and juice box. Vicky assumed that only children who are still in elementary school brought a juice box for lunch. Thus, she thought her mother always considered her as a kid because she prepares it for Vicky. Vicky kept thinking that the bus people would laugh at her on the school bus and judge her because she was carrying a juice box. Vicky spent a lot of her time worrying about things that others do not necessarily think of her, as Wells (1995) stated that the most significant problem of people with social anxiety is the fear of being judged crudely by others.

Vicky becomes sensitive. She always thought that people were laughing at her. The fact is that many of them laugh at other things, not the way Vicky thought.

[&]quot;You're laughing at me."

[&]quot;I'm laughing WITH you," she insists.

[&]quot;Wouldn't that require me to be laughing? Because I clearly am not." I pace the driveway.

[&]quot;I made a complete fool of myself, and everyone was laughing at me, and you're the only one I can talk to about it, and now you're laughing at me, too" (p. 15).

When Vicky told Jenna about the things that embarrassed her in class, Jenna laughed at Vicky's story. However, for Vicky, it was the worst thing. She thought that Jenna laughed at her. Well, Jenna did not mean to laugh at Vicky, but she was laughing in the story. Jenna did not think that Vicky was stupid or wrong. Vicky told Jenna that she embarrassed herself, and all her friends laughed at her. Vicky could only tell her best friend and hoped for support from Jenna. However, knowing Jenna's reaction, Vicky thought her best friend was just like her other friends who laughed at her because she was stupid even though Jenna had said that it was a joke, and she and the others laughed with, not at her.

Vicky was also worried that Marvo would think she was weird and no longer want to meet or greet her.

I'm really trying to listen to him, but my brain can focus on only one thing at a time, and right now, I am conscious of how much I am sweating and worry he'll start to feel a little damp (p. 129).

When Marvo and Vicky were walking down the hallway and talking about something, Vicky should pay attention to what Marvo was saying. However, in that situation, Vicky instead focused on other things and worried about something she should not be. Vicky was anxious that Marvo would notice her sweating excessively and would make him feel uncomfortable about it. Because Marvo was hugging her shoulder, which made Vicky more panicked, she was

afraid that Marvo would feel something wet in his arm, making him not want to meet her anymore.

3.1.5 Negative Thoughts

Beck et al. (1985) found that people with social anxiety particularly have worries, rapid negative thoughts, and automatic negative thoughts, just like Vicky, who always worries about situations where one or more people are involved. She also has thoughts that make her confused and panic excessively. Besides, Vicky has quick and automatic negative judgments or thoughts about something that makes her uncomfortable.

I search, "What does one million people look like?" Images come up. Outdoor events where the masses have gathered. A million people meditating with the Dalai Lama. The mall in Washington, DC, transformed into a sea of humanity. I imagine them all turning to look at me . . . and stare . . . and . . . breath, Vicky. My pulse pounds in my ears. WHAT WAS I THINKING? (p. 159).

Vicky did not expect that she would become famous on Instagram and have one million followers. At first, she created an Instagram account because she was upset with Jenna and wanted to prove that she was not lonely and pathetic.

Vicky quickly became famous among people who also felt that way, even almost all Richardson High School students following her on Instagram. Then she searched on the internet what it would look like if one million people gathered

together. It made her panic because she thought and imagined all of her followers came and looked at her.

I'm afraid to remove my shoes in public.
What if my feet are smelly?
What if there's a hole in my sock?
What if I misplace one of my shoes and then have to walk around with only one shoe? (p. 181).

Of course, there is nothing wrong with removing shoes in public or places required to take them off. However, unlike Vicky, this is what she mostly avoids. When she and Lipton decided to go to the Bowling alley because the East 48 concert was already full, they were required to take their shoes off and replace them with those provided by the venue. However, Vicky refused to do so and froze at the shoe counter. She thought about the things that she should not think and worry about. Vicky had worries about things that were not even possible to happen to her. These thoughts occur in people with social anxiety and become an indication that they have this phobia (Watson & Friend cited in Alkhathami, 2015, p. 34).

When in social situations, Vicky also experiences excessive anxiety and panic when she interacts with someone.

I blink at him. Playing a video game sounds strangely appealing, even though I don't know the first thing about *Minecraft*. But it would also involve going inside his house. Meeting his parents, probably. Maybe a sibling or two. Cue sweat glands (p. 98).

When Vicky decided to hide from Marissa's party, she did not know that she was hiding in Lipton's backyard. When she was about to run, Lipton first greeted her. After an extended interaction, which made Vicky panic and sweats a little, Lipton surprisingly invited her to play Minecraft. Playing video games was not scary for Vicky, but she was thinking and worrying about other things that did not matter to Lipton and might not be wrong, such as maybe Lipton's parents and siblings were lovely people. However, Vicky's mind was quick to think about the things that made her anxious.

I would sincerely like to concentrate on what he's saying, but I'm too busy trying to calm my heart rate and figure out what just happened. Lipton asked me out. *Breathe*. He asked me to come to his house. *Breathe*. To pet his cat. *Breathe*. I panicked and said I was busy (p. 112).

The quotation above shows that Vicky was experiencing excessive anxiety just because Lipton asked her to go over to his house. She could not even concentrate on what Lipton was saying and what she had to say. Vicky just focused on her panic and talked to herself to calm down and keep breathing. She did not even immediately respond to Lipton's request. Until in the end, after struggling with anxiety and panic, Vicky said words she did not want to say, or in other words, she tried to accept Lipton's invitation. However, she was too panicked and finally said, "I was busy," which means rejecting Lipton's invitation.

Another type of cognition in people with social anxiety is fast and automatic negative thoughts.

Hallie thinks I'm a complete idiot now. No, she doesn't. Yeah, I'm pretty sure she does. She's not like that. She's super nice. Even nice people know an idiot when they see one... (p. 8).

Vicky thinks that everyone she meets will judge her as a stupid-weirdo girl, even people considered kind and friendly. The quotation above shows that Vicky thought everyone, including Hallie, who, according to Jenna, is a very kind person, would think she was stupid. Although Jenna had convinced Vicky that her thought was wrong, Vicky still insisted that it was right. Hallie would not feel like that because Vicky tried to greet her, and she was surprised because she knew that Vicky never once spoke to anyone.

Not only Hallie, when Adam, who is her classmate, looked at Vicky with an uncomfortable look, she immediately speculated that he did not like her. "Adam narrows his eyes in a decidedly not-interested-in-your-help sort of way. He hates me. I'm pretty sure...who continues to scowl at me. My brain locks up. All I can do is blink at him. Adam snorts. "Told you, dude" (p. 57). The situation in this quotation happened when Lipton offered her a favor. He was inviting Vicky to join his group with Adam on a World History class project because Lipton felt sympathy for her, who had to work on the project individually, while the others had partners. Vicky, who prefers to do all her project alone, finally

refused Lipton, arguing that she was almost done working on her project. At this, Adam seemed to have expected Vicky to decline, but Lipton kept trying. He narrowed his eyebrows at Vicky, not that he hated her, but he was annoyed by Lipton for insisting on helping Vicky.

Vicky is often forced to present herself or be involved in social situations around her, especially her mother. Watson & Friend (cited in Alkhathami, 2015, p. 34) identified a group of people with anxiety who had a fear of negative assessment from others because feeling compelled to present themselves more acceptably and excessive efforts. Therefore, Vicky always thinks poorly of herself because she feels unable to do those things.

"Then why not have some of them over? We can put up the badminton net. You kids could get to know each other . . ." "Just kill me now." "Oh, please, Vicky. It won't kill you." She drops the pan she's scrubbing into the soapy water and turns to face me again. "I just want you to get out there and live a little. Is that so bad?" There is nothing quite so demoralizing as having your middle-aged mother pause from her Facebooking and dish-washing to suggest that you need to get out more (p. 18).

As happened in the quotation above, Mrs. Decker suggested a party that invited several of Vicky's friends and created a sports area. Of course, Vicky cannot agree. She even preferred to be killed rather than throw a party and meet many people at her house. As her mother said, she just wanted Vicky to get other friends and not to stay in her room all the time. However, Vicky was totally

against this and thought her mother's way would only make her feel worse than before.

There is only one thing worse than never being invited to anything, and that's the pity invite. No, wait . . . even worse than the pity invite is the my-mother-made-me-do-it pity invite. "You're killing me. You are literally trying to kill me" (p. 40).

When her mother suggested a party for teenagers, Vicky did not believe that her mother was trying to put her in a situation she hates, and she thinks that she never be able to lean on. Parties and meeting people in one event will only make her feel sick. Even though her mother only wanted her to hang out like a teenager, Vicky thought it would only mess her. Her mother just wanted Vicky to present herself in the way other teenagers would. However, for Vicky, this was not what her mother should do to her. Parties and anything else that gets crowd is not Vicky's thing. Of course, this only happens to people who have social anxiety. Where interacting and being surrounded by many people will only make them panic and think negative always.

Apart from forcing Vicky to hang out with other teenagers, her mother also forced her to dress the way she wanted. She did this because she saw Vicky has a monotonous style. However, it made Vicky feel that her mother's efforts were only making her more uncomfortable. "But it also wouldn't hurt her to stop treating me like I'm some kind of Barbie doll she can dress up" (p. 46). Vicky

felt upset with her mother, who always forced her to wear clothes according to her mother's taste. When they went shopping, her mother chose a neon skirt and a blacktop.

Meanwhile, Vicky is only interested in oversized sweaters and hoodies, her favorite type of clothing. She is indeed more comfortable wearing oversized clothes because she can hide from everyone around her. Finally, after getting his father's persuasion, Vicky wore the clothes and showed herself in front of her parents. Even so, Vicky thought that the clothes made her look like a fool. She asked her mother not to make her like a barbie dressed up as her mother likes.

3.1.6 Dwelling on the problem

Vicky realizes that her social anxiety can occur at any time because she cannot predict her situations. Therefore, Vicky often prepares anticipation not to get into a problem due to her fear. "The list is long enough now that it's become a sort of game for me to remember everything on it, like trying to name all fifty states" (p. 6). Vicky had made a list she called the Terror List to anticipate herself getting involved in a problem related to her fear of social situations. The list contains things that made her afraid and felt like disappearing since her first year at Richardson High School. The list is also a reminder not to repeat the same mistakes that made her deal with panic and fear.

Marissa DiMarco told me to meet her here. She texted this

morning before I left for school, which thankfully gave me the opportunity to pack two extra T-shirts as backups for the inevitable sweat through, which is happening at this very moment (p. 34).

The quotation above shows that Vicky had prepared anticipation, bringing more shirts when Marissa asked her to meet and do something in the Yearbook room after school. Vicky realized that she is a person who can be panic and sweating unpredictably, so that she had prepared things to help her if there is a problem later. Vicky thought that when she is sweating, Marissa will smell her or her uniform gets wet and makes her embarrassed in front of Marissa. Therefore, she had prepared to anticipate problems that may occur.

The same kind of anticipation she prepares to dwell with problems that might arise in other situations is when she will go to Lipton's concert. She organizes several items which she might need when something embarrassing happens.

I grab my coat and the purse I spent an hour packing with a lifetime supply of mints, tissues, and an extra T-shirt rolled very small and squeezed into a Ziploc bag, just in case I sweat through the one I'm wearing. Which, at the rate things are going, might happen before we even get to the concert (p. 172).

Vicky spent quite a lot of time preparing a few stuff that she thought could help if something went wrong. She prepared extra t-shirts, which she folded and kept in a zip lock bag. Vicky felt that she needed to do such because she was worried

that she would sweat and make the shirt she was wearing smell, thus made

Lipton uncomfortable with her even before they arrived at the concert venue.

Besides being in public places, Vicky also always anticipates herself to avoid problems she did not expect when at school. Such as how she has to dress so that others are not noticing her.

This particular shade of brownish-yellow is a perfect complement to both my hair and the painted-block walls of our school, which is exactly why I'm wearing it. If the dare I'm about to attempt goes badly, I'll be able to blend into my surroundings and disappear before anyone notices (p. 1).

Vicky prepared herself to be unnoticeable by her friends and anticipated if something terrible happened by wearing a sweater with the same color as her hair and almost all the school walls. She thought that if there was something wrong and beyond predictions, she could hide or be camouflaged with those walls. Thus, the people around her will not notice. However, of course, this is unlikely to work because somehow somebody can still see her. Nevertheless, Vicky, fearing for something that happens beyond her predictions, has thoughts as a form of anticipation.

3.1.7 Having Low Self Confident and Self Esteem

People with social anxiety always feel that they are worse than others, strange, and unworthy. So, it will affect self-esteem and self-confidence

(Hidayati, 2012). Vicky still thinks negatively about whatever is around her, including herself. She still feels that other people are much better than her. It, of course, affects self-esteem and feels insecure in all situations. "I won't win any popularity contests dressed like a giant blob of Dijon mustard" (p. 1). At the beginning of the story, Vicky has shown a symptom of social anxiety, she is feeling like a giant blob of Dijon, and she feels stupid because she is wearing an oversized sweater that she can use to hide. Vicky prefers to wear this kind of fashion even though she realizes that she will not win any dress contests by dressing like this.

"I mouth the word "thanks," and he smiles wider. My face gets hot.

Because I'm ridiculous" (p. 74). Vicky always thinks she is a freak and ridiculous because she is still acting like a *weirdo* when interacting with her friends. It is like when responding to Lipton for giving her an article paper related to her project. When Lipton gave it thumbs-up, Vicky immediately looked around and made sure that no one paid attention to them. She whispered the word "thanks," which made Lipton grin, and Vicky reflexively looked down in embarrassment. She thought that she was so ridiculous just because she had dared talk to Lipton.

"The fact that I know this pretty much confirms that I am, in fact, a pathetic weirdo stalker" (p. 34). Vicky named herself as known in the quotation

because she prefers to stalk her friends at school through social media. Even though she also watched every Richardson High School student quietly. This activity makes her feel so pathetic, and she thinks that she is a *weirdo*. Vicky even knows the color of Raj's favorite t-shirt. She always pays close attention to his expression when walking in the hallway and found the usual expression Raj posts on his Instagram. She also stalks the Instagram accounts of others.

"She gives me a side-eye. "Yes, and I think you'd look great with one of those hairstyles." Because I look terrible the way I am" (p. 84). This quotation is a conversation between Vicky and her mother while heading to a hair salon. Although she refused at first, she finally complied with her mother's request because she thought cutting hair was nothing too terrible than appearing like her mother's style. When Vicky was watching a pile of torn magazines containing all kinds of hairstyles, her mother thought that Vicky would look more attractive if she changed her hairstyle just like one of them. Vicky automatically assumed that she did look bad the way she is now. However, her mother did not mean it, she just wanted her daughter to try something new, and maybe if Vicky cut her hair a little, she would be more confident and would not have to look down when walking. Nevertheless, Vicky still feels that she is terrible.

Sometimes, Vicky realizes that she is indeed a freak and awkward person.

That is why she never made friends and interacted with people. However, this is

not entirely caused by people who have social anxiety like Vicky. They just need someone who is always supportive and tells them that they are just like people they think is much better than them. "I sound like a freak.. I wasn't always this bad, or maybe I was and didn't realize it until Jenna left" (p. 6). Jenna is one of the support systems for Vicky. She was also a shield, which would always protect Vicky from fear and anxiety when in social situations.

However, Vicky felt even worse when Jenna left and was no longer by her side when walking to the class or facing her friends. Vicky just realized that she was a freak when there was no longer someone who always supported her. Since then, Vicky has become a much more introverted person and does not want to make friends and interact with other students. "...because my brain has thankfully gone into complete lockdown and we have swept away in the throng of students. *This is why you can't have nice things, Vicky.* Like friends. Or conversations" (p. 5). Vicky thought that she did not deserve to make friends other than Jenna. She is always acting, which makes other people judge her as a freak person. The quotation above shows that Vicky realized that sometimes she felt lost and did unexpected things. That is why she cannot have good things in her life.

Apart from thinking negatively about herself, Vicky often compares her friends who are much better than her in her mind. It is one of the reasons that

people with social anxiety often feel inferior. Hidayati (2012) stated that people who experience social anxiety always thinking that they are worse than others. "My mother's face is pained as if failing to be an adoring fan of Marissa DiMarco is making it all the more unbearable that I will never *be* Marissa DiMarco" (p. 18).

Marissa DiMarco is one of the most popular students at Richardson High School. Some of her photos are always attached to the School Yearbook. Vicky is also one of her secret admirers. She often stalks Marissa's Instagram because she thinks that Marissa deserves to be known. Vicky, who is always busy with her thoughts and not interested in a social situation around her, prefers to stalk her friends via Instagram.

When she found Marissa's photos with her friends, Vicky felt amazed and thought she could never be like Marissa. Having lots of friends and being fashionable is not Vicky's thing. "I have absolutely no reason to dislike them, but I do. They're so perfect. So everything that I am not" (p. 18). This quotation also shows that Vicky compares herself with other people she thinks are better than her.

When Vicky's best friend moved away and went to a different school, she soon found new friends. However, Vicky still keeps in touch with her best friend.

One day Jenna told her that she felt some kids watched her when she was on the

bus. This information made Vicky quite worried. It turned out that after a few days, Jenna and the kids became good friends. She told them that they had taken a photo together and were going to send it to Vicky. After Vicky saw the picture, she knows that Jenna was pleased with them. Vicky admits that they look like good people and are perfect. Vicky hates them for taking her best friend and blames her for not being perfect like them.

3.1.8 Avoiding Classes

Besides having an impact on Vicky's mental health, her social anxiety also impacts her school activities, whether academic or non-academic. Vicky frequently goes missing on purpose to avoid class and other school activities.

Instead of continuing to my world history class, I duck into the nearest girls' bathroom, trying to tamp down a sudden wave of nausea (p. 5).

It's too late to get to class on time, so I take a disinfecting wipe from my backpack (I always have a supply on hand) and clean the toilet seat where I'll be spending the next period (p. 6).

An incident beyond Vicky's control that made her embarrassed and very anxious was when she accidentally hit Adrian, walking in the hallway, which made his drum stick fly away. Luckily, Vicky was able to catch the stick. That made Adrian in awe of her. However, Vicky felt that she was stupid in front of Adrian. Instead of giving stick directly and leaving, Vicky said words that she should not

say and made Adrian surprised by Vicky's behavior. Without thinking anymore, Vicky ran away because she felt panicked and dizzy due to the incident.

Instead of running to the class, Vicky went to the bathroom. Unfortunately, she spent too much time in the toilet and made her very late and would embarrass herself even more if she went to the class. Therefore she preferred to stay in the toilet longer and spent her World History period there until the next period, "I spent the second period in here, and then decided I might as well stay through until lunch" (p. 13).

Besides the World History class, Vicky also skipped other classes. After the embarrassment in the previous class, Vicky chose to hide in the toilet. She sat on the book she had stacked in the bathroom and spent time there until the lunch period. It means Vicky purposely avoided class in the second period. After three hours of silence in the toilet, and she heard the bell indicating the fifth period English class, she decided to leave.

Mrs. Greene, a guide and counselor at Vicky's school, also confirmed Vicky's disappearance, "You've been missing some classes lately," says Mrs. Greene......"And the missed classes?" She opens a folder in front of her. "Two last week, one Monday, and three yesterday"(p. 25). After confirming that Vicky had left classes several times, she was asked to see Mrs. Greene in the guidance room. Mrs. Greene confirmed that Vicky often skipped classes by showing her a

folder. Teens with social anxiety often miss classes and other school activities.

This situation also happens to Vicky, who prefers to hide in the toilet instead of attending classes, making her feel excessively anxious.

3.1.9 Social Withdrawal

Feeling of shame and not wanting to show themselves to the public may be considered normal because it may not last long and does not have a meaningful effect on that person. However, people who have a social anxiety disorder are not interested in taking part in social activities (Henderson & Zimbardo, 2009). Like Vicky, she does not want to show herself in public, and the feeling of shame accompanied by panic and excessive anxiety has the worst effect on her, especially her mental health. That is why Vicky is not interested in the social activities around her.

I scan the list. Book Club. Chinese Club. Drama Club. Feminist Club. BPA, EAC, AFS, OTM. So many impossibilities. I had no idea. "Anything of interest?" she says. "Not really." I pass the list back to her. She scans it herself. "Math league?" I shake my head. "Handbell choir?" I shake my head harder (p. 26).

Here, Mrs. Greene was suggesting Vicky join a club or activity at her school.

Mrs. Greene thought it would make Vicky more active in extracurricular activities and be useful for her college applications. Of course, from all the list of activities that Mrs. Greene shows, Vicky had nothing to interest her because

joining a club and meeting people is one thing on her Terror List. "The yearbook staff is always looking for help," she says. "Editing photos, doing page layouts . . . Does that sound of interest?" "I don't know." The thought of joining an already-formed group is making me want to vomit" (p. 27).

After Mrs. Greene tried to get Vicky to join her school activities, she finally found a club that might make Vicky interested. Previously she asked Vicky about things or activities she likes or does when she is free. Of course, Vicky will not say that she enjoys manipulating herself with Photoshop or she spends her time stalking her friends' social media accounts every night. In the end, she said that she spent a lot of her time in front of her computer. Mrs. Greene offered several activities, such as gaming and computer programming club. However, Vicky quickly rejected those offers and explained to Mrs. Greene that she studied Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator for a long time.

After thinking and looking for extracurricular activities that match Vicky's interest, they finally found a Yearbook staff who always needs help in photo editing and layout. Even though Mrs. Greene felt that this activity suited Vicky, she hesitantly accepted the offer, and she imagined how to join a club that requires interaction with many people. This situation made her feels nauseous and anxious.

Working in groups is something that Vicky has always avoided because she

does not know what to do if someone or everyone in her group stares at her and invites her to interact. That is why in various projects in her class, she prefers to do it herself. "I cling to the words "up to" in hopes that I can do the project alone, in my group of one" (p. 23). At the second meeting of World History class, Mr. Braxley announced that there would be a project in which students present on a topic of their choosing. This project is for groups of up to four students, and they can determine their members. When everyone in the class starts to get excited about choosing group members, and Mr. Braxley began reading out the topics to discuss, Vicky remained silent. She focused on the lunch box she was holding under the table. She was not interested in working in a group and did plan to work on this project individually.

Furthermore, showing herself to the public had a bad impact on Vicky, especially emotionally. Therefore, she prefers to spend time after school in her room and do something that makes her not think about the world. However, for her mother, these things should not be done. Her mother wants Vicky to interact with her peers or attend a party, typically for teenagers.

My mother has been telling people I'm "just shy" my entire life, and maybe that excused a lot of my awkward behavior growing up. But I don't think it explains whatever's wrong with me now. This isn't the same as hiding behind her skirt when I was little or timid around strangers. This is me feeling like I'm going to die if I have to walk into that house. And I don't understand why she doesn't see that (p. 94).

Although Vicky refused to go to a party at Marissa's house, her mother insisted on taking Vicky there. Her mother said she would take her to a pizza restaurant. After realizing that they headed to Marissa's house, Vicky begged her mother not to do this. Her mother insisted that Vicky was just shy, and she could overcome this. However, for Vicky, it was not just shyness. She felt like she would die if she had to walk into Marissa's house and meet many people. While in the car, Vicky feels very intimidated by her mother, who forces her to go. She also felt very sick when she imagined what would happen if she met her friends inside.

Besides, people with social anxiety usually avoid social situations and events when other peers attend (Rubin et al., 2006). Vicky always eschews and prefers places where no one will stare at her or ask her to interact. Being alone and hiding from people make her calmer than having to be around her friends, who would make her intimidated. "Which is gross, I know, but the cafeteria and I are presently estranged and there's nowhere else to go" (p. 13). Like during lunchtime, if all students eat their lunch in the cafeteria, Vicky prefers to eat it in the toilet. Even though she admitted that it was gross, but she had no other choice. Vicky thought that the cafeteria is not her place. She always feels anxious to eat in a public place where all the Richardson High School students are there, so that Vicky chose the toilet as her place.

The toilet might be Vicky's escape when she feels anxious, or something is happening unexpectedly, however, since she joined the yearbook staff at her school. Vicky finds a decent place to hide from the crowd and have lunch even though the other staff sometimes ask her to interact. "I don't have to talk to anyone or go to meetings or give high fives or even sit in the same room at the same time as anyone else. I can just slip behind a computer in the corner and do what I do best—watch from the sidelines." (p. 35). During her first meeting with Marissa in the yearbook's office, she was shown some things to do and told that she could ask questions about anything related to the school yearbook via group chat. It means that she does not need to interact a lot with other members while working. Although she was hesitant to join at first, Vicky started to like this club because she can work and focus on her computer in the corner of the room and does not need to interact much.

Apart from avoiding people at school, Vicky is also not interested in any event held by her friends outside of school, such as parties, concerts, etc. She prefers to be in her room all day long rather than going to parties and meeting her peers. "I'd rather hide in my room than go to a party, which is probably the definition of pathetic. But Jenna and I had plenty of fun *not* going to parties" (p. 72). The quotation above shows that Vicky is not interested in going to parties at all. She prefers to hide in her room. Her mother forced her to go to a party which

was held by Marissa DiMarco. She told Marissa's mother that Vicky was coming. Of course, it makes Vicky feel upset because she hates parties and crowds. Even when Jenna was still with her, she preferred to do fun things with Vicky rather than parties.

Avoiding things like parties or groups is what I've always done, and I wouldn't begin to know how to change that (p. 95).

Please tell me you did not invite kids from school to a party." It hardly bears mentioning that parties are on the Terror List (p. 16).

Her mother managed to trick Vicky, which made her in front of Marissa's house by saying that she had to face all her fears and worries. Vicky just needs to walk into the house with a smile on her face and say hello to her friends. Vicky was silent and suddenly told her mother to leave her. Then she went to find a place to hide and get away from Marissa's house. From the quotation above, it can be seen that Vicky has always avoided parties and crowds because she does not know how to face her fear. Parties have been on her Terror List for a long time.

3.2 The Ways Technology and Vicky's Schoolmates Help her to Deal with Social Anxiety

3.2.1 Using Photoshop Skill to Create Fake Identity

When Vicky experiences excessive anxiety and fear because of an event or situation that she did not expect, she also has some ways to overcome them. One

of them is using her ability in Adobe Photoshop technology.

I turn the music back up and stare at the picture, and it almost feels real. I'm there. Only I'm not worried that people are laughing at me, or I'm dancing wrong, or I don't belong. I'm at the concert, not caring what anybody thinks (p. 31).

Vicky opens her Instagram and some Youtube channels to see people out there having a perfect life as her night routine. Then she thought she could be like the people at the East 48 concert by using her Photoshop skill. She manipulated herself as if she was around people by taking several photos in her room, selecting the best ones, and editing them in Photoshop. Vicky photoshopped herself into the crowd. She seemed to be dancing, jumping, enjoying music without worrying about anything and anyone. Even though the photo is just a manipulation, but Vicky feels that it is real. She manages to bring herself into the crowd without anxiety and fear.

Vicky became more comfortable with the manipulation; she even created an Instagram account that she named Vicurious. All the photos she posted were the result of her photoshopping. "So I go to Instagram, where there's always *someone*. Instead of signing in as Kat, I start a new account. I call it "Vicurious" (p. 48). After she knew that her best friend called her pathetic, Vicky wanted to prove that she was not like that. She can interact and go anywhere without feeling nervous, anxious, and scared. That is why she created an Instagram

account, which can be a medium to interact with people out there without knowing who she is.

A few days after she created her Instagram account, Vicky did not expect that she got such an overwhelming response from her followers. She even realized that many of them are just like her, invisible, lonely, and afraid to go public. That is why Vicky, who calls herself *Vicurious*, always tells them that she saw them, making her feel much better.

For the first time in my life, I feel like I can be part of something. I won't be lurking and watching with nobody knowing I'm there. Vicurious gets to put herself out in the world, which I never could (p.52).

When she found out that some people liked her post, which was beyond her expectations, she was very excited because she had never spoken to many strangers before. Knowing that people out there like and see her posts, Vicky feels much better and visible.

Vicky never expected that her Instagram and posts were so influential to her followers. She can even make friends and make her less anxious than interacting with people in real life.

Knowing it's there, that Vicurious is out in the world making "friends," puts my heart in an unnerving state of a hiccup (p. 57).

The first like comes in less than five seconds. Then three more, then ten. Within a few minutes, people are leaving "I see you!"

comments. It makes me feel better (p. 73).

Nevertheless, Vicky felt a little scared and also excited when she knew how many followers she got. Yet, she is more comfortable with people on social media than in real life. Related to Lenhart et al. (2010), adolescents with social anxiety tend to use social media rather than directly reduce stress in face-to-face situations. She also did not expect and was proud of herself because *Vicurious* managed to make friends with many people who feel the same as herself. All the positive comments that her followers write every time she posts her photoshopped pictures make her feel better. It means that many people care about others who feel invisible, lonely, and afraid of existence in public, just like her.

Related to the several results from research on social anxiety and technology use that have been described in the previous chapter, some researchers found that young girls tend to be more comfortable and freer to interact with people through texting rather than face-to-face (Rosen LD, Whaling K, Rab S, 2013; Lenhart et al., 2010). Vicky Decker also experienced this, who feels freer to interact with her followers on Instagram without feeling anxious and depressed. "So, I take a deep breath, and start clicking in comment windows of these people who are suffering. I write: I care. I see you. I'm here for you. I understand. You are not alone" (p. 81).

After Vicky or *Vicurious* got a lot of attention from everyone, she feels more people need attention than her. She saw some of her followers' accounts and knew how not to have someone to chat with because nobody saw them. Then Vicky tried to provide some comments that might make those people feel cared for. Although she doubted that she could do this, she kept trying and writing a few remarks on their posts. Surprisingly, it made her feel better, and she called herself a magical Instagram Fairy.

I don't want any of them to feel left out or overlooked or not good enough. If they leave a comment, though, I reply. I give hearts and smileys (p. 82).

I start leaving comments again. I see you. You are not invisible. Are you okay? They send me smiles and thanks. They ask if I'm okay, too (p. 91).

This Jenna is justjennafied. We start chatting back and forth on the picture I posted of the fuzzy sock cocoons (p. 107).

Vicky is getting used to the comments of her followers. She always responds to them without feeling anxious. Even though Vicky does not follow everyone back, she always responds every time her followers comment on her post. Vicky sees more and more Instagram accounts using the same hashtags as hers and continues to provide comments to them. So, they will not feel left out. Although she knew that what she was doing was not enough, Vicky also thought it was something for them and herself who needed these kinds of people to get rid of her anxiety. Vicky spends her time interacting with her followers, who

have reached more than 14.000 followers. She felt that she became a better version of herself because she could interact with a thousand people and make friends. Vicky also had a long chat with one of her followers, who has the same name as her best friend. Even she also interacts via Instagram with one of her friends at her school.

I stare at it until it stops looking like a real word. I move the cursor to the comment window and hover there for a moment. Then I hold my breath, and I write: **vicurious** You are not alone, Raj. I see you (p. 122).

Vicky had been secretly watching Raj at school for a long time. But she never greeted or even looked at him when he passed her in the hallway. There was nothing wrong with Raj when she saw him at school or on his Instagram. Raj has a unique Instagram account; he posted some of his selfies in the same spot using the same expression; he only changed the t-shirts he wore. Then she found that Raj was not okay, and it makes her surprised and cannot believe that Raj felt the same way as her. Then Vicky comments on Raj's post because Vicky does not want her friend to feel lonely. Of course, she can only do this on social media. If she meets Raj at school, she will remain quiet and not dare to greet him.

In addition to Vicky being freer to interact on Instagram than in real life, it seems that she also chooses Instagram as a place to escape when anxiety and

fear attack her.

I sit at my desk. Open my computer. Log in to Instagram. And with a few clicks, I find my way back to her. I don't care how many followers she has. I'm not going to chase followers again. I just need a place to escape myself. A place . . . (p. 117).

Vicky always wants to disappear from everything that makes her feel anxious, nervous, panic, and so on. If she had a toilet to overcome her anxiety before, she finds another place to hide, her Instagram account or *Vicurious*. Vicky left herself and wanted *Vicurious* to replace her. That is why she spends a lot of time on Instagram because she can interact with people and strangers freely. "And maybe I shouldn't feel like I was really there, but I do. I turn the music up even louder and close my eyes, and I can feel their hands holding me up" (p. 89). Like when she posted her photoshopped picture at the Foo Fighters concert. There were many fans of the band who commented on her post. They were very excited because many of them went to the show. Vicky did not come and never will be. Vicky feels that she is there with her followers, Foo Fighters fans. At the moment, Vicky feels so calm and much better.

3.2.2 The Support of Vicky's Schoolmates to be Proud of Herself

Besides using technology and social media to overcome her social anxiety, her schoolmates' role also significantly reduces it. For example, Vicky's friends accept her as the way she is and always support her. Vicky also has a good

quality of friendship with some of her schoolmates. It gives Vicky the ability to get through all the feelings of excessive anxiety and panic in social situations.

Grills-Taquechel, Norton, & Ollendick (2010) found that social acceptance from peers could significantly decrease social anxiety in adolescence.

"I sighed. "It's not that easy. You know how I am." Her face filled the screen again. "I know exactly how you are" (p. 2). Before Vicky decided to create an Instagram account and photoshopped some of her photos to prove to everyone that she was not a loser and pathetic, she had a friend to whom she only spoke. Yet, her best friend named Jenna moved away and left her. Jenna was like her shield against the world and the people around her. One night, Jenna asked her to talk to other schoolmates and try to make friends with them. Vicky insisted that it was impossible because it would only embarrass her. She explained to Jenna that it was very tough for her to do it, and Jenna realized that Vicky was not easy to get along with people. Vicky never talked to anyone except her. But Jenna still accepts all Vicky's problems, and they become friends who love and support each other.

But Lipton smiles at me as he returns to his desk, and it makes me forget everyone else. I smile back. It reminds me of the way Jenna could set everything right with just a nudge and a "hey." I didn't think anyone else would ever wield such powers again. And yet here is Lipton (p. 133).

Besides Jenna, Vicky also has Lipton, who is always trying to get her to

interact. Even though he knew that Vicky was still quiet and put her head down in the world History class, Lipton tried to get close to her. At first, Vicky thought Lipton had no intention of her, just talking and trying to help. But no longer, their relationship grew closer, and her anxiety reduced when talking with Lipton. When Vicky interacts with other schoolmates who are not very close to her, she still gets panic attacks. Vicky did not expect Lipton to replace Jenna's position as the only person who could accept her and help her against her social anxiety.

If time could stand still, this would be a pretty good moment to press the pause button. I am in a crowd but not terrified of it, in the company of someone who knows I have issues but likes me anyway (p. 188).

For the first time, Vicky accepts someone's invitation to attend a concert, one of the things on her Terror List, and for the first time, she is in a crowd but does not feel anxious or panic. Otherwise, she felt very comfortable and did not want the time to fly. It is because there was Lipton beside her who kept her close to make sure Vicky was safe and comfortable. Although she had told Lipton about anxiety, fear, public places, crowds, and herself, Lipton was still holding her.

When panic and anxiety attack Vicky, Lipton understood her. Even when they were not in the crowd and Vicky started talking scary things about her, he stayed there and calmed her down. "Lipton scoots even closer. His face is inches away. His eyes steady. "You can be yourself with me. I don't want you to be

anyone else. Okay?" I return his gaze. I nod" (p. 222).

At first, Vicky wanted to do the World History class individually, but Lipton offered to work with her. Yet, she rejected him. After several weeks, she finally accepted the offer because Lipton always tried to get close to her. They started preparing the project at Lipton's house, and it was the first time that she visited a friend's house. After preparing their entire project and watching the result, suddenly, Vicky had a panic attack. She thought of things that may happen when she presents in front of the class, which will embarrass her. Vicky was so panicked and felt dizzy because she could not stop thinking about it. Lipton immediately grabbed her and tried to stay calm. After she calmed a little, Vicky explained what had happened to her. Lipton continued to calm her down and tell her that she was going to be okay. Lipton also does not care about Vicky's social anxiety; he asks her that Vicky must be herself and not to be someone else when she is with Lipton.

Her other friends who accept her and are willing to be her friends are the school Yearbook staff. They are Beth Ann, Marissa, and Marvo. When she joined the club, Vicky thought it was not bad because she could only focus on her computer and do editing photos. But later, she got closer to her partners, especially the girls, and they often interacted with each other.

Then Marissa joins in, and we're all laughing, slapping our hands together clumsily, purposely missing and stumbling around. I can hardly believe it, and I'm not delusional enough to expect it to last. But I'm here at the moment; I'm part of the action. It's real, not vicarious. And I am breathing just fine (p. 162).

Like when Marissa was talking about her relationship with Adrian to her partners in School Yearbook. Marissa looked unhappy when she saw her boyfriend spending more time with his friends rather than with her. It happened after Adrian followed *Vicurious* and became obsessed with her. Now Adrian is a person who cares more about his friends who have not been noticed by him. One of those schoolmates is Raj. Even though Marissa was jealous of Raj, but she did not hate him. She was just annoyed that Adrian never had time for her anymore.

Knowing this, Vicky felt guilty and tried to calm Marissa as well as Beth Ann. Seeing their friends crying, Beth Ann and Vicky did something silly, and it succeeded in making Marissa laugh out loud. Vicky, who had never been this close to her schoolmates, is now doing things she never did before. It turned out that Marissa and Beth Ann did not think of her as a freak person. They keep doing silly things and laughing together. Vicky did not feel the symptoms she usually feels when she is part of an interaction. She continued to breathe normally and enjoy the moment to joke around with her partners.

If some of her friends can accept who she is, it means she has good friendship qualities. Even when Jenna moved to Wisconsin, they remained

friends until she found Lipton. "I drag my gaze to the interior of my locker, to the photo of me and Jenna taped on the back wall. I touch the picture because it helps. I don't know why" (p. 4).

After considering the things that must have happened to her for trying to comply with Jenna's request, in the end, Vicky forced herself to talk to someone else, Hallie. As usual morning, Vicky always goes to her locker before class. Coincidentally, the locker next to her belongs to Hallie. That morning she was standing right next to Vicky. She had been thinking about Jenna's words and finally tried to greet Hallie or instead whispered something to her because Vicky sounded more muttering than greeting. Hallie was surprised because it was the first time she heard Vicky say something. Watching Hallie's reaction, Vicky is panic and mocking herself. Then she looks at her photo with Jenna in her locker and remembers how their friendship was when Jenna was in Richardson High School with her. It helps her to get rid of all the anxiety.

I can almost imagine her saying it, leaning her shoulder against mine on the bus seat, huddling in close to listen. Texting is not the same; it never will be. But at least she's there. I exhale the stress knotting my shoulders and recount the story of my failed attempt to say hi to Hallie Bryce in excruciating detail (p. 8).

Although Jenna moved away and left her alone in a situation that makes her feel bad, Jenna is always there whenever she needs her. It proves that they are still in a perfect relationship. Even only by telephone, Vicky could still feel her best friend's presence, as happened when Vicky told about the incident that made her very embarrassed at school. They keep in touch via messages all the way. Vicky thinks that messages are not enough to express all her feelings. But she is grateful because her best friend is willing to listen to all her stories and has a good friendship with Jenna even though Jenna has a new life in Wisconsin.

Apart from having several friends who understand her situation and having a good quality of friendship, Vicky also gets a lot of support from her friends in real life and all her followers on Instagram. Hutcherson and Epkins (2009) found that close friends' support was significantly correlated with decreased social anxiety. The first is Jenna, who has been her best friend, and she called her a shield for about 12 years.

Jenna has been the only person I ever really talk to. When it comes to communicating with anyone else, she has always spoken for both of us. Even if someone directs their question to me. I hesitate, and she jumps in to answer. It's just the way we are (p. 2).

Vicky only talks to Jenna; the rest is she just keeps quiet or even disappears if she is in a public place and meets people. It is because she is unable to deal with her anxiety when people ask her to interact. Luckily, before Jenna moved, she was the one who became Vicky's shield. When Vicky is faced with a social situation, Jenna will come forward to replace Vicky. Even when someone asked Vicky, Jenna would answer it. Thus, Vicky did not need to feel anxious and

embarrassed if she acted like a weirdo because she had Jenna.

However, after Jenna moved, Vicky had no more shield to protect herself from her social anxiety. That is what Jenna asked her to try to talk to other schoolmates. Jenna understands that it would not be easy for Vicky, but she always supports and encourages her best friend.

"That's how we became friends, isn't it? You said hi and the rest is history." "I was five," I said. "I didn't know any better." She laughed. "So, pretend you're five again. You're sitting cross-legged in the grass chewing on a Popsicle stick when a girl with tragically unfortunate bangs walks out of the house across the street. She looks like somebody cut her hair with a machete. Say hi to the poor thing" (p. 2).

Like when Vicky was talking to Jenna on the phone. Jenna advised her that she should talk to other people so she could have more friends. Yet, Vicky insisted that she could not do that. Then Jenna kept providing supports to Vicky. Even she offered a way for her to do it. After thinking about her best friend's suggestion, Vicky tried to talk to other schoolmates.

It is the same when Vicky feels very bad because she feels embarrassed in front of Adrian. She told all about the incident to Jenna when she was on the way home. Of course, Jenna's reaction can always make her calm down and forget about the incidents that made her have panic attacks and feel bad.

No, I'm serious. Adrian probably thinks you're funny, as in FUN.
I don't think so.

You caught his drumsticks! That's so cool. I told him to GO FORTH AN PROSPER. I know! Brilliant.
Are you kidding me?
I'm serious. You're so funny!" (p. 9).

Jenna assures Vicky that Adrian would not think badly of her. She also believes that Vicky is very cool because she can catch Adrian's drum stick. Yet, Vicky, who gets nervous quickly when dealing with somebody, especially Adrian, one of the popular students at her school, assumes that Adrian must think that Vicky is an idiot. It was because she spoke the words that made Adrian speechless. But Jenna keeps telling her that it was not that bad, and Vicky should not feel that way. Vicky remains unsure of what her best friend is saying, but she slowly calms down and thinks it was not as bad as she thought before.

Besides Jenna, Vicky also has a peer who always supports her when she feels down, which is Lipton. Although it was hard at first for her to accept Lipton, after several tries, Lipton finally managed to meet her, and Vicky felt like she had found something that was lost when Jenna left.

I know Lipton can't make me a different person. He can't magically vanquish all my fears or stop my irrational freak-outs. But right now, at this moment, in the space of his arms, I almost feel normal—at least, what I *imagine* normal to be (p. 174).

When Vicky found Lipton, she agreed to be taken to a place where she had not wanted to go for the first time in her life. For the first time in her life, she was

fine when she was around many people. Vicky accepted Lipton's invitation to watch the East 48 concert. Attending the event was one of the things Vicky had avoided. But with Lipton's support, Vicky overcame her fear, and it is where she and Lipton are queuing to enter the concert's venue together with other fans. She feels good and does not bother with the many people around her because she is in Lipton's arms, making her feel safe.

After several minutes of waiting, someone exited from the venue and announced that the entrance had been closed due to too many spectators. It did not upset Vicky because she did not like concerts. After thinking about what they would do while waiting for Lipton's mother to pick them up, Lipton finally found a place. He invited Vicky to play bowling. Vicky initially refused because she hated sports, especially in public places. However, she finally accepted Lipton's offer. It was because Lipton kept reassuring her that everything would be fine.

I am not the least bit sure about trying something new—a sport no less—in a very public place, but I squeeze his hand back and nod anyway. I can't live vicariously forever. "Just please don't let me make a complete fool of myself." He laughs. "Don't worry. That's my job" (p. 175-176).

It was the first time in her entire life that she did things that may be very normal for other people but scary for Vicky. Going to concerts, being around people, and now she plays bowling in public. Vicky can face her fears so far because she

has Lipton, her classmate in World History class, always supportive and never letting her feel bad. Vicky felt fortunate because even after Jenna left, she found someone who was still there when she was anxious and afraid. When Vicky was with Lipton, she thought she was real and did not need to be someone else like she had been doing on social media.

He hugs me tighter, and I hug him back. It makes me feel like a real person. And I need that, amid all the talk of Vicurious. I need a reminder that I exist outside the internet and that someone in the real world wants me *here* more than my followers want me *there* (p. 203).

After having Lipton's support and establishing good relationships with Marvo, Marissa, and Beth Ann in the School Yearbook, Vicky became a tougher person. Even though she felt anxious sometimes, she was gradually able to deal with her fear

If I am winning, it is not against Lipton. Tonight, for the first time in my life, I am winning against the fear of *being*—of taking up space and getting in the way . . . of being wrong or stupid or pathetic or not good enough of being laughed at. Finally, I am winning against myself (p. 187).

My heart is racing, but it's not because of fear or dread or anxiety for once. It's because I overcame those things (p. 199).

Here, Vicky feels that she has won against herself, who always feels anxious, afraid of people's bad judgment, and negative thoughts about her. Now she can go through all the things that she thought were very hard to pass and had never

imagined. It is because Lipton has always supported and he keeps persuaded her. To prove that Lipton was very influential to her, she tried to talk to one of her classmates in World History class, who always mocked Lipton by calling him "Tea Bag." Vicky did not like the nickname and was angry with someone who was mocking Lipton. Yet, Vicky could only feel it by keeping quiet because she did not dare talk to that person. But now Vicky has the courage, and she talks to the girl to stop calling Lipton in that way. Even though she speaks with a shaky voice and she manages to do it. She works to face her fear of talking to other people.

At the end of the story, Vicky completely deals with her fears of being noticed by the public. She changed her social media account to her name and the profile photo without being edited like *Vicurious*. Of course, Vicky does this with Lipton's help and support, who is always beside her.

I leave "vicurious" as my username but change my name to "Just Vicky." When I tap "done," a murmur goes around the cafeteria. They have their phones out. They're watching. "Breath," says Lipton. I smile. I breathe. Then I pull up the cropped photo I just took of myself. No filter. And I wrote: Hi. It's me. Real me. #faceyourfears#onestepatatime (p. 257).

Now Vicky no longer needs to hide behind the costumes, and wigs like *Vicurious* used to be. Now she is the real Vicky, a Richardson High School student who used to be alone and hiding in the toilet. Now she can have lunch in

the cafeteria like the others without being bothered because she has Lipton, who is always there and keeps telling her that everything will be fine.



CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

This research found that Vicky experiences symptoms that indicate she has social anxiety. Those symptoms are fear of interaction, which makes Vicky has difficulty in facing people, especially strangers. Somatic symptoms such as sweating, blushing, and palpitation. Behavioral symptoms such as facing others awkwardly, avoiding eye contact, and stuttering are also some of the researcher's symptoms. Besides, beliefs of being laughed at and rejected by people, dwelling on the problem, having low self-confidence and self-esteem, Impairment, social withdrawal are also the symptoms of social anxiety experienced by Vicky. Those symptoms are described directly and indirectly through the quotations.

The researcher also found the role of technology and peers in reducing Vicky's social anxiety. Vicky uses Photoshop to change herself to become someone else because she wants to live her life like the others without feeling anxious. She edited her photo using costumes, makeup, and hairstyle different from her real appearance. Vicky becomes someone else who is not afraid of social situations. Then, she created another Instagram account, which has a *Vicurious* and fake photo profile due to her photoshopped picture. By hiding behind *Vicurous*, Vicky feels freer and more comfortable interacting

with many people out there.

Besides using Photoshop and Instagram to deal with her social anxiety,

Vicky also has a good quality friendship with Jenna and other schoolmates,

Lipton, Marvo, Beth Ann, and Marissa. This quality of friendship makes Vicky

feel visible and worthy. Also, it increases her self-esteem and self-confidence.

These friends also always give her supports and positive vibes when Vicky

experiences social anxiety and cannot stand her fear of social situations. Besides

having a good quality of friendship and getting some support from her

classmates, they also accept Vicky as the way she is. These make Vicky face her

problems, fears, and worries so that Vicky can deal with and overcome her

social anxiety without becoming someone else.

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