

Section 1:

#1 "Every midnight, the stars above the village flickered off for exactly one minute, but only Liam seemed to notice. Time and time again he tried to show his parents... Siblings... Anyone! But once he got them outside, it had stopped and the stars were back in the sky, their unwavering gaze staring down upon them."

Strengths:

- Strong hook that immediately creates intrigue
- Effective use of tension between Liam and others' perceptions

Weakness: Limited sensory details → Your opening scene could benefit from richer atmospheric elements as you describe the night sky and Liam's frustration. Phrases like "flickered off" and "unwavering gaze" are good starts but need more development.

Exemplar: *The stars above our village extinguished themselves at midnight, leaving nothing but velvet darkness for precisely sixty seconds. I tried desperately to show my family this impossible sight, but they always arrived too late, greeted only by the cold, distant pinpricks of light that seemed to mock my efforts.*

#2 "He knew this must mean something. And on one cold winter night, the wind a howling tempest, Liam crept up to the attic, listening to the creaking timbers warring for supremacy against the legions of wind."

Strengths:

- Vivid description of the atmosphere
- Good use of metaphorical language

Weakness: Point of view shifts → Your writing switches between "he" and "I" throughout the narrative. The line "He knew this must mean something" feels disconnected from the first-person perspective established later.

Exemplar: *I knew there had to be meaning behind it all. That bitter winter night, as howling winds besieged our home, I crept up to the attic, each step accompanied by the protest of ancient timbers.*

#3 "All this time I was unbothered to read the news, yet it gave an obvious answer. Diplomatic relations between us and global superpowers and turned sour and small clashes had began at the borders."

Strengths:

- Effective revelation of the broader conflict
- Good connection between personal and global events

Weakness: Rushed resolution → Your ending reveals crucial information too quickly without building proper tension. Phrases like "obvious answer" and "small clashes" downplay the significance of the revelation.

Exemplar: *If only I had paid attention to the mounting tensions reported in the news. The diplomatic crisis with global superpowers had been escalating for months, border skirmishes growing more frequent with each passing day.*

■ Your narrative presents an intriguing premise but needs more development in connecting the personal and global aspects of the story. The shift from a mysterious phenomenon to military technology could benefit from more gradual revelation. Try adding more details about how the increasing number of "stars" affects the village atmosphere and daily life.

Actionable task: Rewrite the final third of your narrative, focusing on building tension through Liam's growing awareness of the connection between the strange lights and world events. Include specific details about how the village atmosphere changes as more drones appear.

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**Score: 42/50**

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Section 2:

Every midnight, the stars above the village flickered off for exactly one minute, but only Liam seemed to notice. Time and time again he tried to show his parents... Siblings... Anyone! But once he got them outside, it had stopped and the stars ~~where~~ [were] back in the sky, their unwavering gaze staring down upon them. #1

His parents believed that their son was doing nothing but bluff and bluster, his siblings thinking he was genuinely insane. Yet... He knew what he saw. You couldn't mistake ~~thing~~ [things] like this, so it just made him so mad that everyone thought he was!

He knew this must mean something. And on one cold winter night, the wind a howling tempest, Liam crept up to the attic, listening to the creaking timbers warring for supremacy against the legions of wind. He stared out through the circular window and gazed at the stars. #2

He watched them disappear- Then appear in their anomalous lunar cycle. He thought back if he had ever seen this before this week. No... He... He hadn't. Now that he thought deeply about it, he had never seen so many stars in the sky.

So they can't be stars. Then... What are they?

In the next few days, he kept track of the stars- And to his horror, every night more and more came.

While he wistfully peered at them, he suddenly noticed something. One was moving- And quick! And it was coming his way! He jumped out of the attic moments before a gargantuan crash exploded. He then felt his senses dimming and dimming as everything was blurry.

He staggered up a few minutes later. He pushed a piece of redwood off his chest and stared at what had hit the house.

It was a strange steel orb- Still blinking minute after minute.

A few minutes later help came- But not ambulances and police patrols. Soldiers clad in bulletproof vests and submachine guns came in moments later, accompanied by men in dark coats and a distinctive earpiece. Liam was taken to the hospital after that with the rest of the family. But in the next few days the truth came out.

All this time—[Liam] was unbothered to read the news, yet it gave an obvious answer. Diplomatic relations between us and global superpowers ~~and~~ [had] turned sour and small clashes had ~~began~~ [begun] at the borders. #3 These orbs were drones armed with machine guns and flammable liquid. As the news noted, the Central Intelligence ~~believes~~ [believed] they blinked once at midnight to make sure they were all working and functional. That drone had malfunctioned and fallen to the ground. Because it was a problem with propulsion, the fuses had not activated and hadn't detonated.

But we were not safe nonetheless.

There was still an armada loose in ~~out~~ [our] skies.