

Section 1:

#1: Opening paragraph Strengths: Your use of sensory details creates a vivid autumn scene with "cool, autumn breeze" and "papery, amber leaves." The initial sense of unease effectively establishes the story's mysterious tone.

Weakness: Repetitive expression → You repeatedly state that "something was wrong" without developing this feeling through specific sensations. Phrases like "I just really felt like something was wrong. Really, really wrong" tell rather than show your character's unease, missing opportunities to engage readers with more visceral reactions.

Exemplar: *A coldness settled in my stomach as I descended the stairs, making my usual breakfast seem suddenly unappetising despite my growling hunger.*

#2: The shadow speaks and disappears Strengths: Your creative concept of physically searching for a missing shadow demonstrates imaginative thinking. The casual, first-person narration authentically captures a teenager's voice.

Weakness: Underdeveloped supernatural element → The shadow speaking "Don't worry" could be a powerful moment, but you quickly move past it without exploring its impact. This pivotal supernatural element deserves more emotional reaction from your narrator to build tension and make readers feel the strangeness of the situation.

Exemplar: *"Don't worry," the whisper came again, my own voice but somehow hollow. My spoon clattered to the floor as I froze, unable to process what was happening—my shadow was speaking to me.*

#3: Resolution section Strengths: You cleverly connect the shadow's behaviour to the story's resolution. The final moral offers a thoughtful reflection that gives meaning to the supernatural events.

Weakness: Rushed resolution → The connection between the shadow's strange behaviour and the ADHD diagnosis feels abrupt. Your shadow appears to have foreknowledge of the diagnosis, but this intriguing possibility isn't fully explored, leaving readers with unanswered questions about this connection.

Exemplar: *As I settled into my new routine, I wondered if my shadow had somehow known what my parents and teachers hadn't yet realised—that my brain was wired differently, not defectively. Perhaps it had detached itself that day to show me that being different wasn't something to fear.*

Your piece presents an intriguing concept using a supernatural element as a metaphor for the character's undiagnosed condition. The shadow's awareness of something the character doesn't yet know creates an interesting tension. However, you could strengthen the emotional journey throughout the narrative to help readers connect more deeply with your character's experience. The middle portion would benefit from developing the shadow's strange behaviour further, showing more of the character's reaction beyond confusion. Also, consider building more tension before revealing the ADHD diagnosis. The ending feels somewhat hurried and could explore more thoroughly how the shadow's behaviour relates to the diagnosis. Try adding more sensory details to immerse readers in key moments. Additionally, you might strengthen transitions between scenes to guide readers more smoothly through your story's progression.

Score: 41/50

Section 2:

It was like any other Tuesday morning – the wind was blowing its cool, autumn breeze, and our front porch was coated with papery, amber leaves. Yet something about me felt wrong, and I couldn't quite place my finger on what it was. As I went downstairs to have breakfast, ~~I just really felt like something was wrong. Really, really wrong. I just didn't know what it was!~~ [An uncomfortable feeling grew stronger with each step, but I couldn't identify its source.] That's when I noticed something out of the corner of my eye move, just the slightest. Then, I stared at the shelf, suspecting that was what it was. Or maybe I was just going crazy. All that homework surely ~~fuzzes your brain up~~ [fuzzes one's brain up]. #1

As I turned back to eat my cereal, I couldn't help but think that I wasn't hallucinating. Something was definitely wrong, and I could feel it. I turned back and looked at the shelf, and that's when I watched my shadow start moving(in full daylight mind you!). My spoon

clattered to the ground, cutting through the ominous silence. Then, I heard something, like a whisper.

"Don't worry"

Don't worry? Why would I worry? This day is just getting weirder and weirder.

I ran to the bus, just making it in time by the skin of my teeth. That's when I noticed something else. The sun was shining from the East, which means my shadow should be to my left, right? The thing is, it wasn't. I frantically looked around, searching under seats, bags, and even tapping on this one guy because I thought he was my shadow. I flopped down on a chair, giving up on the search for my shadow. What was the point ~~anyways~~ [anyway]? It wasn't like I needed one...right? #2

Great. My shadow is still missing and I'm late for school, probably for the hundredth time this year. When I arrived, of course, ~~I was met by the Deputy Principal for a pit-stop for being late~~ [the Deputy Principal intercepted me for being late] (probably because it was for the hundredth time this year, as I said before). My luck. Then I started the walk of shame down the hall to the Principal's office. That was the last thing I needed.

I sat down in an elegant, velvet chair, and looked down, twiddling my thumbs. The Principal began to talk to me about the consequences of being late and he went on and on and on, and my mind began to drift. Suddenly, I saw something move behind him. I wanted to slap my forehead so badly. Obviously, my shadow decides it's the right time to show up and go crazy behind my Principal's back. No surprise there.

"Do you understand?" the principal's booming voice snapped me out of my thoughts.

"Err yes?" I replied, hesitantly.

"Mhmm, so what did I say?" he said passive-aggressively.

Our conversation went on for a long time, and at one point, I seemed to remember ~~when my shadow said "Don't worry", so I didn't~~ [my shadow's words—"Don't worry"—and decided to follow that advice], and surprisingly, it didn't turn out as badly as I thought. Apparently, my parents received an email saying that I had tested positive for a disorder called ADHD, which means I get distracted easily and can't focus well. The principal seemed to understand this, and moved me to a special class where I wouldn't get in trouble for being late and they would cater to my needs.

I was happy from then on, in my special class. A day later, I saw that my shadow was back in place, and I couldn't help wondering whether it was trying to tell me something. It has never gone rogue since then, and I was glad about that. My personal moral of the story – bad things may just be a blessing in disguise. #3