

Section 1:

#1 - Opening paragraphs (first three paragraphs) Strengths: Your opening immediately creates mystery and draws readers in with vivid sensory details like "sneakers squeaking on the polished floor." You've established an unsettling atmosphere right from the start.

Weakness: Abrupt transitions → Your paragraphs jump between moments without smooth connections. The shift from "I laughed nervously" to "But later, in the library" feels choppy and doesn't help readers follow the timeline clearly.

Exemplar: *Later that same afternoon in the library, the strange feeling returned—like someone was standing just behind me.*

#2 - Middle section (paragraphs about being jumpy and hurrying to the locker) Strengths: Your pacing builds tension effectively, and the phrase "never got closer than a few steps... but it never left" creates a perfect sense of persistent dread.

Weakness: Vague descriptions → You rely on general phrases like "I was jumpy" and "desperate to get home" without showing specific actions or feelings that would help readers experience your fear more deeply.

Exemplar: *My hands trembled as I fumbled with my combination lock, constantly glancing over my shoulder at every small sound in the empty corridor.*

#3 - Climax and ending (final four paragraphs) Strengths: Your climactic moment with the shadow standing in front creates a powerful visual, and the open ending with "For now" leaves readers wanting more.

Weakness: Rushed resolution → The sequence moves too quickly from seeing the shadow to lights flickering to everything disappearing. This important moment needs more detail to have proper impact.

Exemplar: *The shadow's hand rose slowly, mirroring my own movement but delayed, as if it were moving through thick water. My heart pounded as I watched, frozen in place, unable to look away from this impossible sight.*

■ Your piece creates genuine suspense and mystery that keeps readers engaged throughout. The concept of a shadow acting independently is creative and frightening. However, your story would benefit from slower pacing in key moments and more specific details that show rather than tell what's happening. Additionally, smoother transitions between scenes would help readers follow your timeline more easily. Your dialogue with yourself feels natural and adds believability to the supernatural events. Also, expanding on your emotional reactions would help readers connect more

deeply with your experience. Furthermore, adding small sensory details like sounds, smells, or physical sensations would make each scene feel more real and immersive.

Overall Score: 41/50

Section 2:

~~#1~~ The first time I noticed it, I thought it was just a trick of the light.

I was walking down the corridor after lunch, my sneakers squeaking on the polished floor, when I saw it stretching out beside me—a dark, too-dark shape.

~~At first, it looked like my shadow, but the lighting didn't make sense.~~ [Initially, it appeared to be my shadow, yet the lighting conditions made no logical sense.] The overhead lights were bright, yet the shadow clung to me like it was glued in place. And when I stopped, it... didn't.

It took one more step before freezing.

~~I laughed nervously and told myself it was nothing.~~ [I released a nervous laugh and convinced myself it was merely my imagination.] Maybe I'd been staring at too many spooky videos online. ~~But later,~~ in the library, I felt it again—like someone was standing just behind me. [However, later that afternoon in the library, the sensation returned—as though someone was positioned directly behind me.] When I turned, the aisle was empty. Still, out of the corner of my eye, I saw that same shadow ripple against the floor, even though no one was near.

~~#2 By the time last period rolled around, I was jumpy.~~ [By the time the final period commenced, anxiety had consumed me.] Every time I glanced sideways, the shadow was there, always just slightly out of sync. It never got closer than a few steps... but it never left.

~~After the final bell, I hurried to my locker, desperate to get home.~~ [Following the dismissal bell, I rushed towards my locker with desperate urgency to reach home.] The hallway was quiet except for the faint hum of the lights. ~~I shoved my books into my bag, trying not to look down.~~ [I hastily crammed my books into my bag whilst deliberately avoiding any downward glances.] But curiosity got the better of me.

And that's when I saw it.

~~#3 The shadow was no longer just following me—it was standing directly in front of me, stretching tall and thin, its head tilted like it was studying me.~~ [The shadow had ceased merely following

me—instead, it stood directly before me, elongated and slender, its head angled as though examining me intently.] There was no one else in the hall. No one to cast it.

~~It lifted a hand—my hand—but slower, smoother, like it was underwater.~~ [It raised a hand—mirroring my own—yet the movement was slower, more fluid, as though submerged beneath water.]

~~And then, before I could move, the lights flickered and went out.~~ [Subsequently, before I could react, the fluorescent lights flickered erratically before plunging the corridor into complete darkness.]

When they came back on... the shadow was gone.

For now.