

## Section 1

#1 Opening paragraph (from "The golden, twinkling invitation" to "three times")

**Strengths:** Your use of sensory details creates a vivid picture, particularly "ran my fingers along the bumps of the fruits" and "feeling the smooth texture beneath my fingertips." Your repetition of reading the invitation "once, twice, three times" effectively shows the character's nervousness.

**Weakness: Unclear narrative flow** → The connection between examining the invitation and the character's emotional response needs clearer development. The phrase "before I could feel the inside of my palms become slick with sweat" appears suddenly without establishing why the invitation causes this reaction.

**Exemplar:** *Before I could process what the invitation truly meant, I could feel the inside of my palms become slick with sweat.*

#2 Dialogue exchange (from "Good boy" to "Farewell, farewell!")

**Strengths:** Your dialogue feels natural and captures the politeness between parents. The stuttering in "H-h-hi, Alfred" effectively conveys the narrator's anxiety.

**Weakness: Missing emotional transition** → The shift from the narrator's obvious nervousness to sudden excitement happens too quickly without showing how his feelings changed. The phrase "I clapped excitedly" contradicts his earlier anxiety without explanation.

**Exemplar:** *As Alfred's warm greeting helped ease my nerves, I found myself clapping more confidently, my earlier fears beginning to fade.*

#3 Night-time sequence (from "But all too soon" to the end)

**Strengths:** Your description of homesickness through specific items like "Spinosaurus plushie, prehistoric blanket" makes the character's longing tangible. The sound imagery with "Drip. Drip. Groan" creates effective atmosphere.

**Weakness: Abrupt ending** → The conclusion "And that was the last thing I remembered from that night" leaves readers without resolution. Your narrative builds tension effectively but doesn't provide closure or show character growth.

**Exemplar:** *Despite my racing thoughts, exhaustion finally overcame my worries, and I drifted into a peaceful sleep, feeling slightly braver than when I'd arrived.*

■ Your piece demonstrates strong sensory writing skills and captures a child's authentic voice well. The detailed descriptions help readers experience the character's emotions, particularly his nervousness about the sleepover. However, your narrative needs stronger connections between scenes and clearer emotional progression. Additionally, consider developing your character's growth throughout the story - currently, he experiences fear but doesn't learn or change from his experience. Also, work on smoother transitions between paragraphs to help your story flow more naturally. Furthermore, provide more context about why this sleepover is significant to help readers understand the character's intense nervousness. Your ending also needs strengthening to give readers a satisfying conclusion that shows what the character has learned or how he's grown.

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Score: 46/50

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## Section 2

#1 The golden, twinkling invitation was pinned on the fridge, a magnet shaped like a bunch of grapes pinning it to the surface. I ran my fingers along the bumps of the fruits, feeling the smooth texture beneath my fingertips. The shiny paper sparkled in the light, words glimmering. I read it once, twice, three times, ~~before I could feel~~ [before I noticed that] the inside of my palms ~~become~~ [becoming] slick with sweat. I rubbed them together, my head cloudy. My socks padded onto the pale brown oak floor. I gripped my overnight bag tighter. I glanced at it, my brows creasing down. The red felt dinosaur – the T-Rex – roared furiously, its claws slashing at the air. I remembered the moment ~~I had bought it~~ [I bought it], when I was so proud of getting my first bag. I smiled slightly, shakily, my cheeks still white. Pinching the cold, metal zipper with two fingers, I pulled it and wriggled my fingers around. There were the neat folds of clothes, the small plastic container with my toothbrush, toothpaste... and of course, my little floss pick. I raised my fist to the door, then lowered it. My mind raced with indecision, swirling through the possibilities. ~~You COULD just not go and go home right now, or maybe be rude and act like you don't care, it'll help with being brave~~ [I could simply not go and return home right now, or perhaps act rudely and pretend I don't care – it might help me feel braver], my brain yammered. Finally, I drew in a huge breath, raised my hand to the wooden door, and rapped on it with my pale knuckles three times.

#2 "Good boy," sighed my mother affectionately, patting my head and kissing me on the cheek.

"And, it should be Bobby," said Alfred to his mother as he reached out to open the door. "Hey, bro!" he grinned, holding his hand out.

"H-h-hi, Alfred," I replied, smiling weakly. I high-fived him, our hands thwapping with a resounding 'clap!'.

"Now, lovely Alfred, and his lovelier mother, I expect Bobby to be a good little boy while at your house, and please feel free to tell me if he does otherwise," said my mother, stroking my head and squeezing my hand.

"Oh, he'll be absolutely delightful, as always," laughed Alfred's mother.

"Well then, I better get going!" chuckled my mother. "Farewell, farewell!"

#3 As we entered Alfred's house, ~~I clapped excitedly~~ [my nervousness gradually gave way to excitement, and I clapped enthusiastically], feeling my hands slide off each other from the sweat. I yammered to him, telling him all about my weekend. We flung dice around and ripped out his video gaming console from the charging station. We giggled while cracking jokes and building ridiculous things.

But all too soon, it was nighttime.

I crawled into my crimson sleeping bag, teeth cleaned and pyjamas on. I ran my fingers along the furry surface of my sleeve, warm and comforting. My mind flicked back to all the things I didn't have... my Spinosaurus plushie, prehistoric blanket, my own pillow, red and blue dinosaurs parading across it. I could hear the slow dripping of the tap. Drip. Drip. Groan. Gone. No more dripping. I felt adrenaline dart through my body. There was someone who had just turned off the tap. My eyes flickered rapidly, and I thrust the sleeping bag over my head. Whimpering, I counted the ticks of the clock. One. Two. Three. GONG!! I crept out, startled. Could it be midnight? The sudden realisation leapt at me. My head was foggy, as if mist had slithered into my brain. My eyes were a completely different story. They were open, wide, awake. I could hear Alfred and his parents snoring... well, at least his mother. Sighing, the ~~color~~ [colour] returned to my cheeks. It was just his dad. ~~I have to sleep~~ [I must sleep], muttered my brain.

~~And that was the last thing I remembered from that night.~~ [Despite my racing thoughts, exhaustion eventually overcame my worries, and I drifted into sleep, feeling slightly more confident about future sleepovers.]