

Section 1:

#1 - Opening dialogue and character introduction **Strengths:** Your dialogue feels natural and immediately establishes the mother-child relationship. The sensory detail of "rancid and fruity" creates an intriguing opening that draws readers in.

Weakness: Unclear narrative structure → The transition between the opening dialogue and the sensory description "Rancid and fruity" feels disconnected. Your writing jumps between moments without clear connections, making it difficult for readers to follow the story's flow. The phrase appears isolated without context, leaving readers confused about what it describes.

Exemplar: *"Listen to Victor's Mum and do not go to the bathroom at night because you might interrupt them, okay Michael?" asked Mum as she gently patted foundation on her face. The smell of her makeup was rancid and fruity.*

#2 - Car journey and arrival scene

Strengths: Your use of sensory details like "scent of familiar laundry pods" and "emergency cookies" effectively shows Michael's emotional attachment to home. The internal questioning reveals his anxiety authentically.

Weakness: Inconsistent sentence structure → Your writing mixes short, choppy sentences with very long ones, creating an uneven reading experience. Phrases like "I grabbed onto my bag and meandered up the driveway whilst I held Mum's hand" feel awkward and could flow more smoothly. The sentence about the bag straps is particularly confusing with its metaphor placement.

Exemplar: *I grabbed my bag and walked up the driveway, holding Mum's hand tightly. My bag straps dug into my palm like shattered glass as anxiety overwhelmed me.*

#3 - Bedtime and ending scene **Strengths:** Your repetition of "Without the scent of..." creates effective emotional emphasis. The ending with the silhouette tucking Michael in provides a gentle, caring moment that contrasts nicely with his earlier anxiety.

Weakness: Unclear descriptive passages → Your writing contains confusing descriptions that don't clearly convey meaning. "Radiant lights in front of me got darker as a silhouette pushed open the mahogany door" is contradictory - lights cannot be radiant and dark simultaneously. The phrase "thread of hospitable light" is unclear and doesn't help readers visualise the scene.

Exemplar: *The room grew darker as someone quietly opened the mahogany door. A thin line of warm light crept through the doorway.*

■ Your piece captures Michael's first sleepover experience with genuine emotion and relatable childhood fears. The story effectively shows his homesickness through sensory details and internal thoughts. However, your writing would benefit from clearer sentence connections and smoother transitions between ideas. Additionally, some descriptions need clarification to help readers better understand what's happening. Consider breaking up very long sentences and connecting your ideas more clearly. Also, focus on making your descriptive language clearer - avoid contradictory descriptions that confuse readers. Your story has strong emotional depth, but improving sentence flow and clarity will make it much more engaging for your audience.

Overall Score: 41/50

Section 2:

#1 "Listen to Victor's Mum and do not go to the bathroom at night because you might interrupt them [;] okay [?] Michael?" asked Mum as she gently patted foundation on her face.

~~Rancid and fruity.~~ **[The smell of her makeup was rancid and fruity.]**

My seatbelt felt even tighter than before, pressing against my chest ~~onto~~ **[against]** the hard seats. I hate the feeling of my bag on my legs, but this time, I felt empty without it. Empty without the scent of familiar laundry pods, without the scent of my emergency cookies [,] and without the scent of home. A sleepover with Victor was an event this week I waited for, but something told me I was not ready. What if Victor laughed about my ~~pajamas~~ **[pyjamas...]** what if I ~~can't~~ **[couldn't]** sleep[...] would his parents be nice to me[...] would they judge me?

"You have arrived at 78 Telegraph Road," said Google Maps as it flashed.

#2 I grabbed ~~onto~~ my bag and meandered up the driveway whilst I held Mum's hand. There was no one there to welcome me, just pairs of high heels and sports shoes parked outside the house. Before Mum knocked, a woman with chestnut hair greeted us with a warm yet fake smile. She must be Victor's Mum. As my Mum spoke to her about my food allergies, ~~my once soft straps of my bag pierced through my palm like shattered glass.~~ **[the soft straps of my bag dug into my palm like shattered glass.]** I took my navy shoes off and stepped inside the house. ~~Neither was there a fluffy, 'welcome' carpet on the floor — nor was there Spider-Man slippers — just the frosty and menacing floorboards that numbed my spine and neck.~~ **[There was no fluffy welcome mat on the floor, no Spider-Man slippers — just cold, intimidating floorboards that made me shiver.]** No goodbyes. No hugs. The door slammed as Mum left [, and] the roar of the engine ~~meant~~ **[marked]** my first time away from her.

"Where's Victor?" I gently asked [, **and**] tried to avoid eye contact.

"Upstairs, but here are some rules in this house," she replied[.]

'Rule 1: do not touch candles or chandeliers because you might get hurt. Rule 2: never touch fire unless I am supervising you. Rule 3: ~~Play~~ **[play]** for 1 hour on the PC and take a break — it's bad for your eyes.' After half an hour reading about '~~Essential Etiquettes~~ **[Essential Etiquette]** in the Smiths Family', I was finally allowed to go upstairs to find Victor.

Aquamarine chandeliers hung from the ~~roof~~ **[ceiling]** as I heard Victor's PC rumble.

"Hi Victor," I said.

"Hi Michael [.] ~~you~~ **[You]** want to see my room?" he said.

We played some games, watched funny videos [, **and**] played ~~Legø~~ **[with Lego]**, soccer [,] and ~~over again~~ **[more games]**.

#3 Hours passed. Dinner was finished, but ~~they~~ **[the dishes]** were already ~~put~~ **[placed]** ~~into~~ **[in]** the dishwasher. We ~~directly~~ **[immediately]** went to bed [—] no dessert [,] at least none for me [,] no trivia [,] and ~~Monopoly~~ **[no Monopoly]**. I slept on a soft mattress ~~and~~ **[with]** ~~pre-washed~~ **[pre-washed]** bed sheets [. **A**] a dim light seeped through the curtains whilst Victor snored. The harsh hum of the air conditioner kept me awake. Drip, drip, drip — the sink outside leaked [,] and the murmur of neighbours was a belligerent reminder: I am not at home. Without the scent of laundry pods. Without the aroma of homemade cookies. Without the candy scent of my teddy bear.

~~Radiant lights in front of me got darker as a silhouette pushed open the mahogany door.~~ **[The room grew darker as someone quietly pushed open the mahogany door.]** As the doorknob ~~moved~~ **[turned]**, a ~~thread~~ **[thin line]** of ~~hospitable~~ **[warm]** light crept through. A ~~reoccurring~~ **[recurring]** silhouette of chestnut hair flickered under the beaming moon. The silhouette gently tucked my feet under the blanket and turned off the little lamp.