

Section 1:

#1 (Opening prologue and hunting scene)

Strengths: Your opening immediately establishes tension and moral complexity with the hunter's internal justification "Animals... they didn't" contrasted against the tigress's "spark of intelligence." The action sequence flows dynamically, building suspense effectively through pacing and sensory details like "mass of furry weight, sharp claws, and blood-tipped teeth."

Weakness: Perspective clarity → Your narrative shifts between the hunter's limited viewpoint and omniscient observations without clear transitions. The phrase "A hint of something almost human glinted in those hidden depths. The hunter shook it away" creates confusion about whose perception we're following, making it difficult for readers to maintain consistent engagement with the story.

Exemplar: *The hunter glimpsed something almost human in those depths but quickly dismissed the unsettling thought.*

#2 (Three years later transition and mother-son reunion setup)

Strengths: Your time jump effectively advances the narrative whilst maintaining thematic connections through the recurring dream motif. The emotional weight of "Glazed photographs stood proud like a treaty, displaying the unexpected boy" creates poignant contrast between her past actions and present maternal love.

Weakness: Tense inconsistency → Your writing switches between past perfect, simple past, and present tense without clear purpose. The sentence "She'd moved on from bounty-hunting business. She'd tried to make it work, but..." demonstrates awkward tense shifts that disrupt narrative flow and reader comprehension.

Exemplar: *She had moved on from the bounty-hunting business after trying unsuccessfully to make it work.*

#3 (Final confrontation and resolution)

Strengths: Your climactic scene powerfully explores themes of justice, forgiveness, and interconnection through the mother tiger's death and the son's moral choice. The metaphor "like a ying-yang, one fiery red, like a sunset" creates vivid imagery that reinforces the story's cyclical nature and emotional resonance.

Weakness: Metaphorical overextension → Your ending becomes abstract to the point of confusion with phrases like "In its place was a lone silver droplet, shining in the sunlight, like a star of forgiveness." The supernatural elements need clearer grounding in the story's established reality to maintain reader investment and understanding.

Exemplar: *Where the tiger had stood, only morning dew remained, catching the sunlight like a final act of grace.*

■ Your piece demonstrates sophisticated thematic exploration of human-animal relationships, justice, and the consequences of our actions on other living beings. The cyclical structure, beginning and ending with questions about animal emotion, creates compelling narrative architecture that supports your central thesis. Your characterisation of both human and animal perspectives shows empathy and psychological complexity, particularly in the hunter's moral awakening and the tiger's choice between vengeance and mercy. However, your narrative would benefit significantly from a consistent point of view throughout each scene - establish whether you're writing from a limited or omniscient perspective and maintain that choice. Additionally, your tense usage needs careful attention to avoid confusing shifts that disrupt reader immersion. The supernatural elements in your conclusion, whilst thematically appropriate, require more concrete grounding to feel earned rather than imposed. Your dialogue between the tigers needs clearer formatting and attribution to help readers follow the conversation. Focus on strengthening the logical progression between scenes, ensuring each transition serves the story's emotional and thematic development rather than simply advancing plot points.

Score: 41/50

Section 2:

Animals Can't Cry

PROLOGUE

She crept closer, leaning in on the tiger. Silently, slowly, hunting the hunter, she lifted ~~up~~ the gun. One wrong move, and she would be dinner. She thought of her child at home, the town that had been plagued by disappearances in the forest.

For them. Always for them. A dart, a mere dart, then transportation ~~up~~ to the north. No one in the town would get hurt. That was what mattered. The animal would not suffer—not in any way that counted. They were fierce, beautiful things, but not like people. People felt loss. People wept. Animals... they didn't.

The tigress shifted, and her keen, fluorescent eyes swept ~~toward~~ [towards] the undergrowth. A spark of intelligence twinkled in them, but it was more than that. A hint of something almost human glinted in those hidden depths. The hunter ~~shook it away~~ [dismissed the thought]. She had seen that look in beasts before. Reflex, nothing more.

The tigress sprang—up, up, up—coming down with a mass of furry weight, sharp claws, and blood-tipped teeth. The dead-man's trigger went off, and the dart whizzed into the hindquarters by chance.

With a yowl of surprise, the tiger checked itself mid-leap. Forgetting the threat, it chased its tail, stumbling until it dropped to the undergrowth like a rock. For a second, a glimmer shone in its eyes, a drop yet to fall, suspended in time. She dismissed it. Animals couldn't cry.

Hesitantly, she crept up to it, trembling with fear, and met flesh with fur as she stroked the sleeping tiger. She took out a battered walkie-talkie and softly murmured, "Target ~~eliminated~~ [secured]. Bring in the trucks."

TWO HOURS LATER...

A mewl, soft and sweet, echoed out to the jungle. The sheltered cave was emptier now, a space where warmth had been. The cub stumbled into the open, tiny sides heaving, nose lifted for a scent that would never return.

It called again, and again—high, broken sounds that carried through the trees. No one answered. The forest held its silence.

The hunter would have said animals could not mourn, could not cry. But the sound that drifted over the undergrowth told a different story.

THREE YEARS LATER...

Jungle green. That was her first impression as she shot up in bed like a bullet. She shook her head in exasperation. This was the seventh time in a row she'd had the same dream. That tiger...

It had died. ~~Died~~ [It died] from the dart that weakened ~~her~~ [it] when ~~she was~~ [it was] already suffering ~~with~~ [from] post-childbirth issues. But it was an animal. An animal that had killed a previous pet and nearly killed a human. Sure, it was sad, and it had ~~got~~ [gotten] the pro-animal ~~right~~ [rights] people preaching for a while, but everything had died down.

She'd moved on from ~~bounty-hunting~~ [the bounty-hunting] business. She'd [had] tried to make it work, but...

~~Glazed~~ [Framed] photographs stood ~~proud like a treaty~~ [prominently], displaying the ~~unexpected~~ boy that had changed her life. She heaved ~~up, out of~~ [herself out of] bed and ~~carelessly~~ glanced at the clock. 9:08 AM it ~~blared~~ [displayed], ~~shoving her in the face with~~ [filling her with] anxiety.

Where was her son?

—

Human.

The scent was whipped around by the crisp morning air, settling heavily into the nostrils of the hunter. The dormant, faint smell ~~of something~~ lingered like a wisp of smoke from a ~~faraway~~ [distant] fire, dancing before retreating and dissipating.

Child of it.

He was shocked at the observation. He had smelled that strong, tangy smell when the big monsters had swallowed his mother. She was sleeping, but not dead. And that foul woman ~~plucked out~~ [had removed] the human thorn that had felled her.

And this was her child.

—

Run! Run! The instinct was so powerful she was shaking with emotion. Her son was in danger. His trail meandered into the forest[—] twigs snapped[and] crackled leaves.

The trail grew so vague that the last thing she saw of him was a blue strand of thread, fresh and ~~unsullied~~ [clean], ~~laying~~ [lying] innocently on the ground.

He was gone.

—

The child...

Not child. Human.

The human was dawdling about, completely unprotected. Was this a trap? Like when his mother was captured because she went out, lured by the smell of unclaimed fresh meat.

But they wouldn't risk a child's life.

Where did that thought come from?

Something was seeping into his brain, and the smell he hadn't even noticed was growing stronger. And then he was a cub again, wailing for a mother that would never come, because that scent was so strong[that] it felt like she was next to him.

A mournful bay echoed through the treetops. ~~And it was~~ [It was] a ~~most~~ magnificent and terrible thing to hear ~~that~~. It was ~~most~~ likely the first time a grown tiger had given ~~out~~ such a ~~message~~ [cry] of sadness. All that pain[—] it came out.

And he collapsed with a thud.

The boy was still there, and he crept up to this ~~fabulous~~ [magnificent] beast. He was about to raise a ~~milky~~ [small] hand to touch it when a roar, a tiger's roar, purposeful ~~put~~ [but] not fierce, made him stop. He looked up, innocent eyes widening, as he took in a bruised and battered tiger, crimson-orange stained with blood.

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Fire. Fire. Her little boy was on fire. The orange tiger was wrapped around her little boy. That was her first impression as she rushed into the clearing. Two ~~tiger~~ [tigers]... two! And one of them looked very much like...

She looked down at her hands. The hands that had shot that tiger, had doomed that tiger. Any animal-safe dart wouldn't harm an animal, even a severely weak one. Her former scientist friend had loaded ~~a~~ [the] gun for her, a gun she'd thought was safe.

But he'd called her in the middle of her trek, and he'd said that the dart was filled with a serum yet to be tested. It would knock the animal out, but the consequences were unknown. And he'd laughed. Sick.

But wasn't she sick too? Instead of turning around and getting the real serum, she'd continued on. And she'd doomed that animal to whatever fate the universe chose. She'd heard that the tiger had not woken up at the expected time. ~~Breathing~~ [Its breathing] was shallow. So they'd dumped ~~her~~ [it] on the side of the path.

Raised from the dead.

—

~~While~~ [As] the adult human was busy with conflicting thoughts, the tigers had a conversation.

~~Why do I feel so different?~~

~~It's because of the serum. Our connection in the womb kept us connected when I was struck by a 'human thorn' as it is said. And you received the blessing and curse of being human. I survived, only just, because of this. And my injuries almost killed me.~~

~~I don't want to be human!~~

~~You walk both worlds. Come, my child, my cub, the grown-up tiger I never got to raise. You survived because I kept strong, our connection sharing strength.~~

"Why do I feel so different?"

"It's because of the serum. Our connection in the womb kept us connected when I was struck by a 'human thorn'~~as it is said~~. ~~And~~ [You] received the blessing and curse of being human. I survived, only just, because of this. ~~And my~~ [My] injuries almost killed me."

"I don't want to be human!"

"You walk both worlds. Come, my child, my cub, the grown-up tiger I never got to ~~raise~~ [know]. You survived because I kept strong, our connection sharing strength."

And the two ~~tiger~~ [tigers] lay side by side, like a ~~ying-yang~~ [yin-yang], one fiery red like a sunset, the other ~~orange~~ [orange], stripes inky black but somehow glowing at the same time. Blood leaked out of her wounds, and the serum was shared. As the blood was released, a spirit whose time had long come was set free.

~~And the~~ [The] tiger ~~left~~ [cub] nuzzled his fallen mother. ~~And he~~ [He] turned to face the ~~murderers~~ [murderer].

When she looked up, there was one tiger left. ~~And~~ [It] looked at her with piercing eyes, and somehow, [, and] she understood. This was the son of the tiger she had brought suffering to for years.

He plodded over to her son, and a claw rested on his ~~fleshy~~ neck. The boy glanced up, curious. The meaning was clear; [:] a life for a life.

~~And~~ [She] collapsed to her knees, sobbing. This was pain, this was agony, this was what she had done, and what she deserved.

~~Ripped~~ [She had ripped] apart a family. Only to be reunited, and ripped ~~again~~ [apart again].

Death and life, vengeance and justice blurred[as] she inclined her own neck to the tiger. He seemed to consider.

But he dragged his claws across the ground, arching them around ~~to~~ the same spot around the body of his fallen mother. Again, and again, and again, until it was a shallow groove.

He dipped his head, and a drop of water fell from his eyes. Not a tear, but a gesture.

Animals couldn't cry. But he taught her how to.

~~And~~ [She] was crying into that hole, crying for the lives she ~~ruined~~ [had ruined], crying in happiness for her son, and ~~the~~ [for the] hope of a new future.

~~And when~~ [When] she looked up, the tiger was gone.

In its place was a lone silver droplet, shining in the sunlight like a star of forgiveness.