

## Section 1:

#1 - Opening paragraph: "I stepped off the train hesitantly, was this really what I wanted? To meet the one person that left me during my hardships yet gave birth to me?"

**Strengths:** Your opening immediately creates tension and draws readers in. The hesitation and internal conflict feel genuine and relatable.

**Weakness: Unclear pronoun reference** → The phrase "the one person that left me during my hardships yet gave birth to me" creates confusion because it's not immediately clear who "me" refers to in this context. This makes the opening less powerful than it could be.

**Exemplar:** *I stepped off the train hesitantly. Was this really what I wanted? To meet my mother—the one person who had left me during my hardest times?*

#2 - Middle section: "Her arms around me felt like pages of a book I'd stopped reading long ago—familiar, painful, unfinished."

**Strengths:** Your metaphor about the book is creative and helps readers understand the complex emotions. The three descriptive words work well together.

**Weakness: Incomplete metaphor development** → Whilst the book comparison is interesting, it doesn't fully connect to the reunion story. The metaphor feels disconnected from what's actually happening between the characters.

**Exemplar:** *Her arms around me felt like returning to a half-finished puzzle—some pieces fitting perfectly, others still missing.*

#3 - Ending section: "I didn't answer right away. But I reached for her hand. That was enough—for now."

**Strengths:** Your ending shows rather than tells, which is effective. The simple action of reaching for her hand speaks volumes about forgiveness.

**Weakness: Rushed resolution** → The shift from years of pain to acceptance happens too quickly. The emotional journey needs more development to feel believable.

**Exemplar:** *I sat quietly, feeling the weight of ten years between us. Slowly, carefully, I reached for her hand. It was a small step, but it was something.*

■ Your piece tackles a challenging emotional topic with sincerity, and you've created a touching reunion scene. The dialogue feels natural, and you've chosen meaningful details like the faded scarf and gum trees that add Australian flavour to your story. However, your piece would benefit from more careful attention to the emotional pacing. The transition from anger and hurt to forgiveness happens too quickly to feel realistic. Additionally, some sentences need clearer structure to help readers follow your ideas more easily. You could also develop the mother's character more fully by showing specific things she says or does that reveal her personality. Furthermore, the setting could be used more effectively to mirror the characters' emotions. Also, consider adding more sensory details to help readers feel like they're experiencing the scene alongside your characters. Your story has strong bones, but it needs more flesh to make the emotional journey convincing.

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**Overall Score: 38/50**

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## Section 2:

~~I stepped off the train hesitantly, was this really what I wanted?~~ [I stepped off the train hesitantly. Was this really what I wanted?] To meet t [;] I was already here after all. The platform was nearly empty, except for a woman standing near the edge, clutching a faded scarf. Her eyes met mine—uncertain, searching. "Gina?" she asked, ~~voice~~ [her voice] trembling like the winter breeze. I nodded, unable to speak, in disbelief. She took a step forward, then another, until the distance between us was just breath and memory. #1

"I didn't know if you'd come," she whispered, her hands wringing the scarf like it held all her regrets. "I wasn't sure I deserved it." I looked at her—older than I remembered, but still carrying the same familiarity. "You didn't," I said, not cruelly, just honestly. "But I came anyway." Her eyes welled up, and she reached out, hesitating. I took another step forward [;] and we hugged for the first time in ~~40~~ [ten] years. It wasn't perfect. It wasn't easy. But it was real. Her arms around me felt like pages of a book I'd stopped reading long ago—familiar, painful, unfinished. #2

We sat on a bench beneath the rustling gum trees, letting the silence speak first. "I missed your ~~17th~~ [seventeenth] birthday," she said, ~~voice~~ [her voice] cracking. "And your graduation. I watched the video online. You were brilliant." I blinked back something sharp [and] painful. "You missed a lot," I replied. "But you're here now." She nodded, tears slipping down her cheeks. "If you'll let me, I'd like to stay." I didn't answer right away. But I reached for her hand. That was enough—for now. #3