

Section 1:

#1 - Opening paragraph establishing setting and character emotion **Strengths:** Your atmospheric description creates a vivid airport terminal scene with sensory details like "thick with the scent of coffee and stale air" and "nervous energy humming in his bones." You effectively establish Leo's emotional state through physical descriptions like "clamminess of his palms" and the "heavy knot of anticipation."

Weakness: Unclear time progression → The paragraph jumps between different moments without clear transitions. You write "The crowds thinned as the last passengers...trickled out" then immediately "across the sea of faces, he saw her," which creates confusion about whether the crowds are thinning or if there's still a sea of faces.

Exemplar: *The crowds gradually thinned as passengers departed, until finally, amongst the remaining faces, he spotted her familiar figure.*

#2 - Initial dialogue and character interaction

Strengths: Your dialogue feels natural and captures the awkwardness of their reunion with Leo's observation about her hair. The mutual recognition of changes in each other shows the passage of time effectively.

Weakness: Missing emotional depth → The conversation stays on surface-level observations about physical changes rather than addressing the seven-year separation. The phrase "Things definitely change" feels too casual for such a significant moment.

Exemplar: *"So much has happened whilst we were apart. I've thought about this moment every single day."*

#3 - Final reconciliation scene **Strengths:** Your conclusion provides emotional resolution with the metaphor of the knot untying and being replaced by "rushing warmth." The description of their embrace as a "silent conversation" effectively shows their reconnection.

Weakness: Rushed emotional transition → The shift from tentative conversation to complete forgiveness happens too quickly. The phrase "he was home" feels premature given they've barely reconnected after seven years apart.

Exemplar: *Slowly, the familiar comfort of her presence began to ease the years of distance between them.*

■ Your piece demonstrates strong descriptive writing skills and creates a touching reunion scene. The airport setting works well as a backdrop for their emotional meeting. However, you could strengthen the story by developing the characters' emotions more gradually. The seven-year separation deserves more exploration - perhaps showing Leo's specific memories or Clara's reasons for being away. Additionally, the dialogue could reveal more about their relationship and what caused their separation. Try expanding the middle section to show their conversation developing naturally from awkward small talk to deeper emotional connection. Also, consider showing Clara's perspective more - her nervousness and hopes for this reunion. Your writing shows good potential, and with more development of the emotional journey, this reunion scene could become even more powerful and believable.

Score: 43/50

Section 2:

#1 Reunion

The arrival board blinked, a bright, digital flicker against the cavernous dimness of the terminal. The air, thick with the scent of coffee and stale air, buzzed with a nervous energy that Leo could feel humming in his bones. He leant against a polished pillar, the cool stone a contrast to the clamminess of his palms. Seven years. A chasm measured in school semesters and missed birthdays. He hadn't known what to expect, but he hadn't expected the heavy knot of anticipation in his stomach. ~~The crowds thinned as the last passengers from the Boston flight trickled out, their hollow footsteps echoing on the tile floor, and then, across the sea of faces, he saw her.~~ [The crowds gradually thinned as the last passengers from the Boston flight trickled out, their hollow footsteps echoing on the tiled floor. Then, amongst the remaining faces, he saw her.]

#2 Clara hadn't changed as much as he thought she would. Her face was etched with a few more lines around the eyes, but her smile was the same, a little tired but genuine. Her suitcase handle rattled against the ~~tile~~ [tiled] floor as she walked, a familiar sound. She stopped a few feet away, her eyes scanning the crowd before locking on his.

"Leo?" she said, her voice a little breathy, like she was holding back a sob.

"Mom," he managed to say. The word felt foreign, too big for the small space between them.

A silence stretched, filled only by the distant announcements. He wanted to say, "I missed you," but all he could think of was a foolish observation. "Your hair," he blurted out.

A small, genuine laugh escaped her. ~~"Yours is longer. It used to be a little boy's bowl cut. Things definitely change."~~ ["Yours is longer. It used to be a little boy's bowl cut. So much has changed between us."]

#3 The laughter faded, and a more serious expression settled on her face. Her eyes, the exact same shade of brown as his, glistened.

"I know I can't get that time back, sweetheart," she said, her voice low and steady. "But I'm here now. And I'm not going anywhere."

Tears welled in his own eyes. ~~The knot in his stomach finally untied itself, replaced by a rushing warmth.~~ [The knot in his stomach began to loosen, replaced by a tentative warmth.] He took a step forward, and then another, until he was close enough. He dropped his bag and opened his arms, and ~~for the first time in seven years, he was home~~ [slowly, the familiar comfort of her presence began to bridge the years between them]. The embrace was tight, a silent conversation of apology, forgiveness, and love that spanned all the years they had lost.