

Section 1:

#1 - Opening paragraph: "The train slowed to a stop, groaning as the metal pieces hummed. James' heart seemed to have started a marathon, beating faster every second. His eyes scanned the crowd nervously, moving around like lasers."

Strengths: Your opening creates immediate tension and establishes the setting clearly. The metaphor comparing James' heart to starting a marathon effectively shows his nervousness.

Weakness: Unclear imagery → The phrase "moving around like lasers" doesn't quite work because lasers don't move around in a scanning pattern that readers can easily picture. This makes the description confusing rather than vivid.

Exemplar: *His eyes darted across the crowd, searching desperately for a familiar face.*

#2 - Memory sequence: "Memories came flooding into his mind, washing away all other thoughts like a tidal wave. Them holding hands while going down an alleyway; her pushing the swing he was on, their faces filled with laughter. The memories formed endlessly, not letting him stop thinking about them."

Strengths: Your use of specific memory details like holding hands and swinging creates a clear picture of their past relationship. The tidal wave metaphor shows how powerful these memories are.

Weakness: Repetitive structure → You repeat the word "memories" three times in a short passage, and the phrase "not letting him stop thinking about them" says the same thing as the tidal wave metaphor you already used.

Exemplar: *Images flooded back: them holding hands down narrow alleyways, her laughter ringing out as she pushed his swing higher and higher.*

#3 - Final paragraph: "As they finally started to walk to his old house, James smiled. He promised himself he would visit it more frequently. He would spend more time with his family and friends, and less on work and official matters. He pulled out his phone, making a call to his boss to schedule a vacation later in the year."

Strengths: Your ending shows character growth and gives James a clear plan for change. The phone call detail makes his promise feel real and immediate.

Weakness: Rushed conclusion → The ending jumps too quickly from the emotional reunion to practical decisions without showing us James' feelings or thoughts about this important moment.

Exemplar: *As they walked towards his childhood home, James felt something shift inside him—a quiet determination that work would never again keep him away this long.*

■ Your piece captures a genuinely moving reunion between James and his mother after years apart. The emotional core of your story is strong, and you've chosen a relatable situation that many readers will connect with. Your writing shows good instincts for creating tension and using specific details to bring scenes to life. However, your story would benefit from more consistent pacing throughout. Additionally, you could develop James' internal thoughts more deeply to help readers understand exactly what he's feeling during this important moment. Also, consider showing us more about why James stayed away for so long—this would add depth to his character. Furthermore, the middle sections of your story move at a good pace, but the ending feels quite rushed compared to the careful build-up you created earlier. Try spending more time on the resolution to match the emotional weight you've established. Your dialogue and character interactions could also be expanded to make the reunion feel more complete.

Overall Score: 43/50

Section 2:

The train slowed to a stop, groaning as the metal pieces hummed. James' heart seemed to have started a marathon, beating faster every second. ~~His eyes scanned the crowd nervously, moving around like lasers.~~ [#1 His eyes darted across the crowd, searching desperately for a familiar face.]

There. He spotted the person he was looking for. ~~James' mother seemed to have travelled through time, which she kind of had.~~ [James' mother seemed to have travelled through time, which in a way, she had.] Her face was lined with wrinkles, and her expression was hopeful as she scanned the crowd for him. Every second passed anxiously as he waited for her to spot him.

As their eyes finally met, time seemed to slow down, their faces flickering between hope and desperation. ~~Memories came flooding into his mind, washing away all other thoughts like a tidal wave. Them holding hands while going down an alleyway, her pushing the swing he was on, their faces filled with laughter. The memories formed endlessly, not letting him stop thinking about them.~~

[#2 Images flooded back: them holding hands down narrow alleyways, her laughter ringing out as she pushed his swing higher and higher. The recollections overwhelmed him, each one more vivid than the last.]

They stared at each other for one endless second, not believing their eyes. People around them seemed oblivious to what they were doing, but this moment was the most special moment of his

whole lifetime. Then, without a word, they raced towards each other, tears springing ~~out wildly~~ [forth] from their eyes.

And for the first time in years, James and his mother embraced each other ~~like they never did before~~ [with an intensity they had never shared before]. He could barely remember what it felt like, until now. Her scent was fresh and sweet, like breathing in perfume. The smell reminded him of his hometown, where he was born. ~~All the fun he had in it, and how he was leaving it because he found a job in the city far away.~~ [He remembered all the joy he had experienced there, before leaving for a job in the distant city.]

She pulled back finally, her fingers brushing his hair. Then, she asked James why he hadn't come home ~~when he was working~~ [during his time working away]. He glanced down, and ~~realised~~ [realised] that she was right. It had been two years since he had visited his hometown, and he had not ~~gone there since.~~ [returned since].

~~As they finally started to walk to his old house, James smiled. He promised himself he would visit it more frequently. He would spend more time with his family and friends, and less on work and official matters. He pulled out his phone, making a call to his boss to schedule a vacation later in the year.~~

[#3 As they walked towards his childhood home, James felt something shift inside him—a quiet determination that work would never again keep him away this long. He pulled out his phone, already planning to speak with his boss about taking regular breaks to visit home.]