

Section 1:

#1 - Opening paragraph with Leo's nervous anticipation

Strengths: Your piece creates immediate tension through Leo's physical reactions like his racing heart and tapping fingers. The metaphor of the knot "twisting like a tightening rope of dread" effectively shows his anxiety.

Weakness: Sentence Structure Issues → Your opening contains some awkward phrasing that makes reading difficult. The phrase "each loop pulled taut by the weight of unspoken fears and rising tension" becomes too complex and hard to follow. Additionally, "Would she keep to her words, to arrive at twilight" has an unnecessary comma that breaks the flow.

Exemplar: *"Would she keep her promise to arrive at twilight from New York?"*

#2 - The mother's appearance and Leo's recognition

Strengths: Your writing captures the shock of recognition well through the fragmented questions "Who was this? Why-?" The repetition of "The woman who" effectively builds emotional impact.

Weakness: Unclear Description → Your description of the mother's appearance lacks clear details that help readers visualise her properly. "Bony cheeks" and "ashen hair" are vague, and the phrase "steam rising from his ears" doesn't fit the realistic tone of your story.

Exemplar: *"He could barely contain his anger, his face flushing red with emotion."*

#3 - The reunion and embrace

Strengths: Your piece shows Leo's internal conflict beautifully through his uncertainty about whether to hug back. The ending creates a satisfying sense of resolution with "finally felt whole again."

Weakness: Inconsistent Dialogue Tags → Your dialogue punctuation needs improvement throughout this section. "Stop," Leo complained should flow better, and some dialogue feels disconnected from the surrounding narrative.

Exemplar: *"'Stop,' Leo said quietly, though he couldn't bring himself to pull away."*

■ Your piece tackles an emotionally powerful topic about family separation and reunion. The core story has strong emotional appeal and you've chosen an interesting perspective by focusing on the son's experience. However, your writing would benefit from clearer sentence structure and more consistent descriptions. Additionally, some parts of your story feel rushed - you could spend more time showing Leo's mixed feelings rather than simply telling us about them. The dialogue needs more natural flow between characters. Also, your ending resolves things quite quickly after ten years of separation, which might seem unrealistic. Consider showing more of the awkwardness and complexity that would exist in such a reunion. Your metaphors show

creativity but some become confusing rather than helpful. Focus on making your sentences clearer and your descriptions more specific to help readers connect better with Leo's experience.

Overall Score: 42/50

Section 2:

#1 Leo's heart raced as he waited. His fingers nervously tapped against his worn-out jeans. A knot formed in his stomach, twisting like a tightening rope of dread, each loop pulled taut by the weight of unspoken fears and rising tension. ~~Would she keep to her words, to arrive at twilight from New York?~~ [Would she keep her promise to arrive at twilight from New York?] Or would she lie to him like the last time he saw her? Passengers started to trickle out, the silvery moonlight illuminating each person's features. Families hugged. Words of affection rushed through the air.

"Leo?"

#2 He turned. A short woman, with pale skin, ashen hair, and bony cheeks smiled faintly at him. Who was this? Why-? Then, he realised that was his mother. The woman who had left him. The woman who had abandoned her child. The woman that didn't care. A flood of emotions rushed through his veins.

"You-" He managed, barely able to contain his anger, steam rising from his ears.

"Me," she smiled. The same quick-witted self, he saw. Tsk.

It had been ten years. Ten years since she had given her last words. Ten years of letters unanswered, birthdays missed, calls never returned. Ten years.

A lump formed in his throat. "Mom-" He staggered angrily, the word feeling foreign on his tongue. "Why-?"

#3 ~~"You've grown so tall," she interrupted, like nothing had happened, and this was just a train ride back from work.~~ ["You've grown so tall," she interrupted, as if nothing had happened and this was simply a train ride back from work.] Yeah, ten years of work without any communication. She poked Leo's cheek.

~~"Stop," Leo complained.~~ ["Stop," Leo said quietly.] He couldn't bring himself to yell at her, [;] her eyes still heavy with exhaustion and a trace of love he knew before. His expression softened.

"Still the same closed-off Leonardo I know," she embraced him. Leo didn't know what to do. He hadn't gotten a hug for so long – was he to lift his arms and hug her back? Or was that too sweet? His hands found their own way, patting his mother on the back – which was awkward, yes, but at least he wasn't just standing there.

For a moment, everything was so quiet you could hear a pin drop. The answers to his questions no longer mattered in the affectionate silence. What mattered was the mother who had returned, and the son who could finally let go. The people around them faded. And for the first time in years, Leo finally felt whole again.