

Section 1

#1: Opening paragraph

Strengths:

- Your opening creates mystery effectively by hiding the source of fascination in a pouch, which makes readers curious about what's inside.
- The descriptive details about the coin (rose gold, eroded engravings, fox and pine tree symbols) paint a vivid picture.

Unnatural phrasing → The phrase "attracted laughter and fascination wherever she went" feels awkward because we don't yet know why this happens. The opening sentence promises something but doesn't connect clearly to what follows. Additionally, "its engravings eroded with decades of fingers" uses unusual wording—engravings don't erode "with" fingers, they erode "from" or "by" handling. The phrase "helped her decide to take a risk" is also grammatically incomplete; it should explain how the coin helped (perhaps "helped her decide whether to take a risk").

Exemplar: *"Thalia Fox carried a secret in the worn pouch around her neck—a rose gold coin whose engravings had faded from years of handling."*

#2: The discovery scene (first and second paragraphs)

Strengths:

- Your description of Thalia's emotional escalation is strong, showing panic through physical details like her eyes changing colour.
- The progression from discovering the coin is missing to realising the necklace is gone too creates good tension.

Rushed emotional development → The panic feels too sudden and extreme without enough build-up. You jump from "extremely unexpected" to "round holes of horror" very quickly. The scene would benefit from showing more of Thalia's thought process—perhaps a moment where she checks again, or tries to remember when she last saw the items. Also, Charlotte's entrance feels too convenient

and her reaction ("you look like you need some air") doesn't match the severity of what's happening—the room is destroyed and Thalia is clearly devastated.

Exemplar: *"Thalia checked the pouch again, her fingers trembling as they found only empty fabric. She tipped it upside down, shaking it hard. Her sapphire necklace should have fallen out, but nothing came. Both were gone."*

#3: The resolution (final paragraph)

Strengths:

- Your message about self-reliance and bravery comes through clearly.
- The connection between Thalia's fear and her dependence on the coin is well-drawn.

Underdeveloped realisation → The ending feels too quick and neat. Thalia's transformation from someone who depends on a coin for every decision to someone who embraces independence happens in just a few sentences after one ride. This is a major character change that needs more time to develop. You tell us "Thalia understood" but don't show us the thinking that led to this understanding. What specific thoughts went through her mind? Did she remember other times she was afraid? The leap from "I went on a scary ride" to "I don't need my lucky charm anymore" is too large without more steps in between.

Exemplar: *"As Thalia caught her breath, something clicked in her mind. She'd chosen to go on the ride herself—no coin flip, no excuse if it went wrong. The decision had been completely hers, and she'd survived. More than survived—she'd loved it. Maybe, she thought, she'd been hiding behind that coin for too long."*

■ Your story has a clear structure and an important message about independence and self-confidence. The concept of a lucky charm that prevents someone from making their own choices is creative and relatable for young readers. However, your piece would be stronger if you slowed down the storytelling. Right now, events happen very quickly—Thalia loses her items, goes to the fair, has one experience, and completely changes her thinking. Real change takes time.

Think about adding more scenes that show Thalia struggling with decisions at the fair. Perhaps she faces several small choices before the big ride, and each time she reaches for her pouch and must stop herself. This would make her final realisation feel more earned. Additionally, your descriptions sometimes use complex phrases that don't quite work ("amber eyes dilating to a panicked brown so dark that it was almost black"). When describing emotions, simpler and clearer language often works better than trying to create elaborate images.

Also, consider developing Charlotte's character more. Right now, she appears when convenient but doesn't feel like a real person. What does she think about Thalia's coin obsession? Has she noticed it before? Does she deliberately choose the scary ride to help her friend, or is it just coincidence? Answering these questions would add depth to your story. Finally, the flashback technique interrupts the flow—you could simply describe Thalia's feelings during the ride without the "FLASHBACK" and "BACK TO THE PRESENT" labels, which would make the reading experience smoother.

Overall Score: 42/50

Section 2

~~#1 Thalia Fox attracted laughter and fascination wherever she went. The reason for that was hidden, nestled in the folds of the soft, worn pouch that was kept suspended on a string around her neck. [Thalia Fox carried fascination with her wherever she went, and the reason lay hidden in the soft, worn pouch suspended on a string around her neck.] Concealed within the sagging folds of the fabric pouch lay [Inside the pouch lay] a rose gold coin, its engravings eroded with [eroded by] decades of fingers [handling]. One side had [bore] a blurred image of a fox, while the other had [displayed] faded carvings of a pine tree. This is [was] what Thalia regarded as her lucky charm, and it helped her decide to take [helped her decide whether to take] a risk like her wild family of Foxes are [was] known to do, or to retreat calmly, like a pine. Each morning, Thalia would fish it out to polish, so it was extremely unexpected when, two months ago, Thalia's slender, expecting [expectant] fingers brushed nothing but air. Anxious, the teenager upended her pouch, half believing that the coin would fall out with her sapphire necklace, which was carved with the same symbols. It didn't. The treasured [treasured] coin was gone.~~

#2 She shook the ~~sateen~~ [sateen] pouch even more vigorously, her amber eyes ~~dilating to~~ [widening in] a ~~panicked brown so dark that it was almost black~~ [panic] when she ~~realised~~ [realised] something worse. Her necklace, her replacement choice-maker, was gone too. By then, her ~~amber~~ [eyes had become round with] ~~eyes had morphed into round holes of horror,~~ [horror—] she had lost her lucky charm and her family heirloom all in one day! She tore through her dorm room, notes and books creating a fine carpet of paper. Thalia sighed as her auburn hair slipped back out of her ponytail. Her dorm buddy, Charlotte, popped in and surveyed the mess warily. "Hey, Foxy!" she beckoned to her friend, "How about we go to the fair first? The fair is going to end in one hour, and you look like you need some air." Reluctantly, Thalia followed her BFF and headed out of her now trashed room, leaving the failing mission behind ~~with it~~ [].

The fresh air came as a shock to Thalia, who hurriedly drank it in, while the pair headed downtown ~~and toward~~ [towards] the fair. The carnival was filled with entertainment of all sorts, and the pair of girls were overwhelmed by the abundant assortment of activities. "Which way, Foxy?" queried Charlotte, glancing expectantly at the vacant pouch. Thalia resisted the temptation to reach into it and pointed straight forward; an electrical thrill raced along her spine. She had never done this decision-making without her coin before, and the only way she could describe this floating feeling was... free! Thalia strutted down the ~~land~~ [path], skipping after Charlotte with a spring in her step, listening contentedly as her friend chattered about this ~~pair~~ [paired] ride that they just had to go on. But her confidence melted when she saw the amusement ride plate; Double Plummet of Devastating Doom. Instinctively, Thalia's knees locked and she froze. "C'mon, Foxy, this will be fun," Charlotte coaxed. Thalia reached for the pouch again but forced her arm back to her side. She nodded and was led onto the Ride of Doom.

#3 The ride took her breath away as Thalia plummeted, the wind ~~blasted~~ [blasting] her face and she whooshed down the spaghetti tube at the speed of light. Finally, she arrived at the bottom of the ride with a big splash that drenched the lifeguard next to her. Thalia froze in time. "Were you scared?" Charlotte asked her BFF, urging her to think back.

FLASHBACK

Thalia plummeted alright, but no fear arose to take her throughout her whole ride. Instead, there was a warm feeling that blossomed in her chest, making her feel like she could take on the world.

BACK TO THE PRESENT

Thalia understood[—] the feeling was pride. She used to use the coin to decide for her because she was too scared to say no. It was like saying that it was not her fault that the coin showed the pine. But now it was different. Thalia could say that she was brave for choosing the harder choice by herself. Thalia smiled the biggest smile ever. "Let's do it again!"