

Section 1:

#1: Opening paragraph

Strengths:

- You create a strong emotional connection by showing Ella's attachment to the pendant through sensory details like "cool weight" and describing it as more than decoration.
- Your opening immediately establishes both the problem and the stakes, drawing readers into Ella's search with clear motivation.

Missing Scene Transition → Your writing jumps quite suddenly from Ella searching inside her house to being outside in the garden. Readers might wonder when she decided to stop looking indoors and move outside. The phrase "She hurried outside, scanning the garden where she had sat the night before" appears abruptly without explaining why she thought to look there or what made her give up searching inside. A smoother connection could help readers follow Ella's thought process more clearly.

Exemplar: *After finding nothing inside, Ella remembered sitting in the garden the previous evening. She hurried outside, scanning the grass where she had relaxed the night before.*

#2: Middle section (forest chase and stream)

Strengths:

- You include physical details like "brambles tugged at her sleeves" and "icy water soaking her clothes" that make the journey feel real and challenging.
- Your description builds atmosphere well with phrases like "the forest grew more ominous" and "heavy with damp earth and shadows."

Underdeveloped Character Response → Whilst you mention Ella considering turning back after falling into the stream, your writing doesn't fully explore her feelings or thoughts during this difficult moment. The phrase "for a moment she considered turning back" tells us what happened but doesn't show us enough about her internal struggle. Readers would benefit from understanding what thoughts ran through her mind, what fears she fought against, or what specific memory of her grandmother strengthened her resolve to continue.

Exemplar: *For a moment, she considered turning back—her clothes were soaked, her hands stung from scratches, and the forest seemed endless. But then she remembered her grandmother's words: "Courage isn't about being fearless; it's about pushing forward despite your fear." Ella took a deep breath and pressed on.*

#3: Snake encounter and resolution

Strengths:

- You create genuine suspense with the snake encounter, using sensory details like "something slithered" and "a hiss rose from within" to build tension.
- Your ending connects back to the beginning nicely, showing how the experience changed Ella's relationship with her pendant.

Rushed Climax → Your most exciting moment—encountering the snake—happens very quickly without enough detail or emotional depth. The phrases "summoning all her courage, she thrust her arm back" and "a startled snake slid out, then hissed as if swearing then vanished swiftly" move so fast that readers don't have time to feel Ella's fear or bravery. This is the moment where she proves herself, but your writing rushes through it in just a few sentences. Spending more time on her racing heartbeat, trembling hands, or the exact moment she makes the choice to reach in again would make this scene more powerful and memorable.

Exemplar: *Ella's heart pounded so loudly she could hear it in her ears. Her hand trembled as she stared at the dark opening of the log. Every instinct screamed at her to run, but she thought of her grandmother and the pendant inside. Taking three deep breaths to steady herself, she squeezed her eyes shut and plunged her arm back into the darkness. Her fingers closed around the cool metal just as something scaly brushed past her wrist. She yanked her hand out, and a startled snake emerged, hissing indignantly before disappearing into the undergrowth.*

■ Your piece tells an engaging adventure story with a clear beginning, middle, and end. The concept of Ella chasing her lost pendant through the forest creates natural excitement, and you've chosen meaningful details like the engraved star and her grandmother's gift to make readers care about the object. However, your writing would become much stronger if you slowed down during the most important moments. Right now, you move through events quite quickly, particularly during the exciting parts like the snake encounter. Instead of rushing to tell us what happens next, try pausing to

show us what Ella sees, hears, feels, and thinks during these crucial scenes. Additionally, your paragraphs would flow more smoothly with clearer transitions between locations and actions. For example, the shift from searching indoors to suddenly being outside needs a connecting thought or sentence to guide readers along. Your ending works well thematically, but the middle sections—especially the climax with the snake—need more detailed description and emotional depth. Consider expanding the moment when Ella must choose between safety and courage by describing her physical sensations, her fears, and the specific thoughts that push her to act. Also, think about adding small details about the forest around her during key moments: what does the log look like? What sounds does she hear whilst waiting? These additions will help readers experience the adventure alongside Ella rather than simply hearing about it afterwards.

Overall Score: 43/50

Section 2:

#1 When Ella awoke that morning, she knew something was wrong. The cool weight of her silver pendant, the lucky charm she had worn every day since her grandmother had given it to her, no longer rested reassuringly against her neck. She leapt from bed, pulling open drawers, shaking her quilt, and even crouching to peer beneath the frame. Her heart sank as she realised that the pendant was nowhere to be found. A hollow chill spread through her chest, for the charm had always been more than decoration; it was her talisman of courage, a small circle engraved with a star, a reminder that she was never truly alone.

~~She hurried outside, scanning the garden where she had sat the night before.~~ [After finding nothing inside, Ella remembered sitting in the garden the previous evening. She hurried outside, scanning the grass where she had relaxed the night before.] The grass glittered with dew, but no trace of metal caught the light. A rustling in the hedge startled her, and a blackbird darted out, carrying a glint in its beak. Ella gasped and ran after it. Her slippers slapped against the stone path as she chased the bird beyond the gate and into the woods. Brambles tugged at her sleeves and thorns scratched her hands, yet she pressed forward, eyes locked on the glistening object in the bird's beak as it vanished deeper into the trees.

#2 The forest grew more ominous, the air heavy with damp earth and shadows. Strange sounds – creaks and whispers ~~echoed~~ [echoed] between the trunks, making Ella's heart hammer. At one point,

she slipped into a shallow stream, icy water soaking her clothes. ~~For a moment she considered turning back, but the thought of losing the pendant forever pushed her on.~~ [For a moment, she considered turning back—her clothes were soaked, her hands stung from scratches, and the forest seemed endless. But then she remembered her grandmother's words: "Courage isn't about being fearless; it's about pushing forward despite your fear." Ella took a deep breath and pressed on.] Then, through a clearing, she spotted the blackbird perched on a branch above a hollow log. As Ella crept closer, the bird tilted its head, released the charm, and it tumbled into the darkness of the log.

#3 She dropped to her knees and reached inside. Her fingertips brushed smooth metal, but something slithered over her hand. A hiss rose from within, and her stomach tightened in fear. ~~Summoning all her courage, she thrust her arm back into the log and pulled. A startled snake slid out, then hissed as if swearing then vanished swiftly into the undergrowth.~~ [Ella's heart pounded so loudly she could hear it in her ears. Her hand trembled as she stared at the dark opening of the log. Every instinct screamed at her to run, but she thought of her grandmother and the pendant inside. Taking three deep breaths to steady herself, she squeezed her eyes shut and plunged her arm back into the darkness. Her fingers closed around the cool metal just as something scaly brushed past her wrist. She yanked her hand out, and a startled snake emerged, hissing indignantly before disappearing into the undergrowth.] In her other hand, gleaming faintly in the dim light, was the pendant. Relief washed over her in a wave so strong it nearly brought her to tears.

With the charm once again secured around her neck, Ella retraced her steps home. The forest no longer seemed menacing; birds sang above and the path appeared brighter, as though the charm had broken the spell upon the woods. By the time she reached her gate, the morning sun had broken fully through the clouds. She touched the star-engraved circle and smiled. The pendant had not simply been lost and found; it had tested her courage, and in overcoming the challenge, Ella felt she had earned its blessing all over again.