

Section 1

#1: Opening paragraph (Lily woke up one bright morning... she had to find it.)

Strengths:

- You've created a clear problem that makes readers want to keep reading—Lily's lost pendant immediately gives the story purpose and direction.
- The emotional connection is established well through the detail about the grandmother, helping us understand why this object matters so much to Lily.

Underdeveloped setting and character reaction → Whilst you tell us Lily feels "strangely exposed," you could paint a clearer picture of what this morning looks like and how Lily's feelings show through her actions. Instead of simply stating she "felt something was wrong," consider showing us through specific details—perhaps her hand trembling as she searches, or the usual morning sounds feeling different to her. The phrase "her heart sank" is quite general and could be strengthened with more vivid description of her physical response.

Exemplar: *Lily's fingers trembled as they swept across the empty bedside table. The pendant—her grandmother's silver pendant—wasn't there. A cold, hollow feeling spread through her chest, as if the morning itself had suddenly lost its warmth.*

#2: Garden and park search (The sun was hot... didn't want her to find it.)

Strengths:

- You include sensory details like the hot sun and scratching thorns that help readers experience Lily's journey alongside her.
- The crows add an element of tension and make the search feel more challenging and mysterious.

Vague connection between events → The transition from the garden to the park feels quite sudden, and we don't learn much about what Lily's thinking or feeling during her search. When you write "Still, there was no sign of her charm," this tells us the result but not the experience. How does Lily feel

after searching the garden thoroughly? What makes her decide to move to the park? The sentence "It was almost as if something—or someone—didn't want her to find it" introduces an interesting idea, but it appears quite late and isn't connected to earlier events. You could build this mysterious feeling throughout the paragraph rather than adding it at the end.

Exemplar: *After searching every corner of the garden, Lily's hope began to fade. Perhaps the park held answers. But when the crows descended with their harsh cries, circling overhead as she approached, an uneasy thought crept into her mind—what if the pendant didn't want to be found?*

#3: Creek discovery and resolution (At the creek... truly was.)

Strengths:

- The action sequence at the creek is engaging, with clear physical challenges (slippery mud, fast water) that create suspense about whether Lily will succeed.
- You've included a satisfying ending where Lily reflects on what she's learnt through the experience.

Rushed emotional journey → The final paragraph moves very quickly from the moment of recovery to Lily walking home, missing opportunities to explore her feelings more deeply. When you write "Relief washed over her," this is another general phrase that could be expanded. What does relief actually feel like for Lily in this moment? The list "The scratches, the crows, and the near fall" summarises her journey, but you could help readers experience her reflection more fully. Additionally, the promise to "never leave it behind again" appears suddenly—you haven't shown us Lily realising she was careless with the pendant in the first place. This makes the lesson feel added on rather than discovered through the story.

Exemplar: *As the pendant settled into her palm, still cold from the creek water, Lily's legs suddenly felt weak. She sank onto the grass, holding the charm against her heart. All the fear from the morning—the empty bedside table, the fruitless searching, the near-tumble into rushing water—slowly melted away. Looking at the pendant now, she understood something new: its value wasn't just in bringing luck, but in the memories woven into its silver links.*

■ Your piece tells a complete adventure story with a clear beginning, middle, and end, which shows good understanding of story structure. However, your writing would benefit from slowing down and exploring moments more deeply rather than moving quickly from event to event. Think of your story as a journey where readers want to experience each step alongside Lily, not just hear about where she went.

You're strongest when including physical details like the scratching thorns and fast-running water, so practise adding these sensory elements throughout your writing. Also, consider showing emotions through actions and thoughts rather than naming them directly. Instead of writing "she felt disappointed," you might describe how her shoulders slumped or how she had to blink back tears.

Additionally, look at your transitions between paragraphs. Each new paragraph jumps to a new location quite suddenly. Try connecting these sections by showing Lily's decision-making process—why does she go to each place? What's she thinking as she travels? Your conclusion introduces the idea that Lily was careless, but you haven't shown this earlier in the story. Perhaps you could add a moment where Lily remembers taking the pendant off or realises when she lost it. This would make her final promise feel more natural and earned. Finally, you use several general phrases like "her heart sank" and "relief washed over her" that could be replaced with more specific, original descriptions that help your writing stand out.

Overall Score: 42/50

Section 2:

#1 → Lily woke up one bright morning and immediately felt something was wrong. She reached for the silver pendant that always hung by her bed—her lucky charm—but her hand closed on nothing. ~~Her heart sank. That charm had been with her for years, ever since her grandmother gave it to her. Without it, she felt strangely exposed, as if something bad might happen.~~ [A hollow ache spread through her chest. That charm had been with her for years, ever since her grandmother gave it to her. Without it, she felt strangely exposed, vulnerable, as if the world had tilted slightly off balance.] She knew she had to find it.

She started by searching her bedroom, pulling open drawers and peering under the bed. No luck. Then she thought back to the day before. She had been in the garden, then at the park, and finally by the creek. With determination, Lily set out on a journey retracing her steps. **#2** → The sun was hot as she scoured the grass in the garden, and thorns from the rose bushes scratched her hands. Still, there was no sign of her charm.

When she reached the park, a group of crows swooped down, cawing loudly as though they were guarding something. ~~Lily's stomach flipped.~~ [Lily's stomach twisted with unease.] Could they have stolen it? She bravely walked forward, shielding her face. One shiny object glimmered in the grass, but it was only a coin. Disappointed, she pressed on, but the feeling of mystery deepened. It was almost as if something—or someone—didn't want her to find it.

#3 → At the creek, the water ran fast after last night's rain. Lily spotted something silver glinting at the bottom, caught between two rocks. Her pulse raced. She leant over carefully, but her foot slipped on the muddy bank and she almost tumbled in. With all her strength, she grabbed a stick, stretched it out, and hooked the chain. She pulled, holding her breath. At last, the charm slid free from the rushing water and dropped safely into her hand. Relief washed over her.

Clutching the pendant tightly, Lily smiled. The scratches, the crows, and the near fall into the creek no longer mattered. She had her lucky charm back, and with it, her confidence. As she walked home, she promised herself she would never leave it behind again. The adventure had been frightening, but it had also reminded her how precious the charm truly was.