

## Section 1

**#1: "Dust hung thick in the air of Great Grandpa Ben's attic. Cobwebs draped over old trunks and faded photos. There, in a quiet corner, sat a vintage guitar."**

### Strengths:

- You've created a vivid picture of the setting using sensory details like dust and cobwebs
- Your short sentences build atmosphere effectively and draw readers into the scene

**Pacing and Flow** → Your opening moves very quickly through descriptions without giving readers time to settle into the attic setting. The three short sentences feel choppy when read together. Consider combining some ideas to create a smoother rhythm that lets readers absorb the atmosphere you're building.

**Exemplar:** *Thick dust hung in the air of Great Grandpa Ben's attic, where cobwebs draped like curtains over old trunks and faded photos, and there in a quiet corner sat a vintage guitar.*

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**#2: "The guitar's surface, once polished to a shine, now carried the marks of time. Faint fingerprints layered over decades of handling had worn it dull. A thin crack ran across the spruce top, like a lightning bolt frozen in place."**

### Strengths:

- Your description of the guitar's condition shows good attention to physical details
- The simile "like a lightning bolt frozen in place" creates a memorable visual image

**Repetitive Description** → You describe the guitar's appearance in great detail here, but you've already mentioned "The wood gleamed just a bit" and how Jason saw it earlier. This section repeats information about the guitar's condition without moving the story forwards. Your readers already understand the guitar is old and damaged, so adding more descriptions of its worn surface slows down the narrative.

**Exemplar:** *The guitar bore its age proudly—faint fingerprints dulled its once-polished surface, whilst a thin crack ran across the spruce top like a lightning bolt frozen in place.*

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**#3: "When it cleared, he sat straight on a worn chair. Grandad stood there, smiling wide. His eyes sparkled with a joy Jason rarely saw."**

**Strengths:**

- You've shown Grandad's emotions through his physical expressions rather than just stating he was happy
- The phrase "a joy Jason rarely saw" hints at deeper character relationships

**Unclear Transition** → The sentence "When it cleared, he sat straight on a worn chair" confuses readers because we don't know what "it" refers to or why Jason's vision needed to clear. You mention "His vision blurred for a split second" just before, but the connection between Jason's panic, his blurred vision, and suddenly sitting on a chair isn't clear. This makes it hard to follow what's actually happening in the scene.

**Exemplar:** *Jason blinked away his panic and looked up to find Grandad standing in the doorway, smiling wide, his eyes sparkling with a joy Jason rarely saw.*

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■ Your piece tells a touching story about a boy discovering his great-grandfather's guitar and the bond they share through music. The emotional heart of your narrative—that broken things can be mended with care—comes through clearly in the ending. However, your story would benefit from tighter focus on the most important moments. You spend considerable time describing Jason's fear of the attic and the guitar's condition, but these descriptions sometimes repeat the same ideas. Additionally, consider streamlining the middle section where Jason works on the guitar. You mention he uses "pliers, wire cutters, a small file" and works for hours, but we don't see what he actually accomplishes during this time. When Grandad appears, the guitar still has three broken strings and the crack remains, which raises questions about what Jason was doing all night. Your story would feel more complete if you showed Jason making one specific repair or attempting something concrete. Also, think about how Grandad seems to know exactly what Jason has done without seeing the guitar yet—this moment could be strengthened by showing rather than having Grandad simply know. The workshop scene at the end beautifully demonstrates the theme of restoration, but it might work even better if Jason

helped Grandad with the repairs, reinforcing their connection through shared action rather than Jason only watching.

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**Overall Score: 44/50**

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## Section 2:

#1 Dust hung thick in the air of Great Grandpa Ben's attic. Cobwebs draped over old trunks and faded ~~photos~~ [photographs]. There, in a quiet corner, sat a vintage guitar. It had gone untouched for years, maybe decades. The wood gleamed just a bit, ~~holding on to~~ [clinging to] its old pride. It waited for hands that could wake its music. Jason climbed the creaky stairs that day. His heart pounded hard. Fear made his eyes jump from shadow to shadow in the low light. The room smelled of old paper and faint mildew. He wanted to turn back, to head down to the safety of the kitchen. But something pulled him deeper. Then he saw it. A beam of golden sun slipped through a cracked window. It lit the guitar like a spotlight. The neck curved smooth, the body shaped like a gentle hourglass. Jason stepped ~~closer~~ [forwards]. His breath caught. This was no ordinary find. It was Grandad's guitar from his youth, back when he played at local dances and family gatherings. Jason's fingers, smudged with dust and bits of varnish from poking around boxes, reached out. He gripped the strings one by one. They felt stiff under his touch. With steady pulls, he tightened them. Each twist brought a faint twang. #2 The guitar's surface, once polished to a shine, now carried the marks of time. Faint fingerprints layered over decades of handling had worn it dull. A thin crack ran across the spruce top, like a lightning bolt frozen in place. It told stories of rough moves or a forgotten fall. Three strings dangled limp, twisted and loose like vines left to wither. They ~~snapped~~ [had snapped] from age and neglect, silent witnesses to years without care.

The clock downstairs struck midnight. Its chimes echoed up the stairs, sharp and clear. Jason didn't move. He bent low over the small lamp on a nearby crate. Its warm glow pushed back the dark. He worked on, twisting and tuning, sweat beading on his brow. Tools from a dusty toolbox lay scattered—pliers, wire cutters, a small file. He adjusted the bridge, filed down rough edges on the frets. Hours blurred as he focused. "Will it ever play again?" Jason whispered to himself. His voice shook. He knew Grandad might wake and climb up any moment. The old man slept ~~light~~ [lightly] these days. Jason pictured the surprise, the questions. What if Grandad got mad? The guitar was a treasure, not

some toy to tinker with. A low hum broke the quiet. Then came footsteps on the stairs. They grew louder, steady and sure. Jason's drill whirled one last time. ~~His vision blurred for a split second—panic, maybe, or just tired eyes. When it cleared, he sat straight on a worn chair.~~ **[#3 Panic seized him for a split second, but when he looked up, there stood]** Grandad ~~stood there~~, smiling wide. His eyes sparkled with a joy Jason rarely saw. "I see you've found my old guitar," Grandad said, his voice warm and rough from years of stories. "I've waited a long time for someone like you. A kid with real fire for music to hold it right." Jason stammered, "Y-y-yes." Worry twisted in his gut, mixed with confusion. Had he done wrong? Grandad leaned in. "You fixed it up, didn't you? Played a note or two?" His grin grew, like he already knew every twist Jason had made. Jason looked away from those kind eyes. He stared at the guitar in his lap. Time had scarred it deep. The crack still marked the wood. Those three strings hung slack, dead as forgotten promises.

A soft pause filled the room. Grandad nodded, then took the guitar with gentle hands. He carried it to his workshop downstairs, a small space full of half-fixed clocks and polished wood scraps. There, under brighter lights, he worked his magic. His fingers, gnarled but sure, replaced the loose strings with fresh ones. He sanded the crack smooth, sealed it with careful glue and a thin brace underneath. The varnish got a light buff, bringing back a hint of its old shine. When he finished, the guitar looked alive again. Grandad sat in his rocker. He strummed once, a soft shuffle of chords. The notes rang clear and true, filling the air with a melody from long ago. Each string hummed in perfect tune. Jason watched, his chest tight with awe. That sound washed over him like a wave. It chased away the fear. In that moment, he knew deep down—things broken by time could heal. A cracked guitar, a scared heart, all of it. With care and a steady hand, anything could sing once more.