

# Section 1

## #1: Opening Paragraph

*Strengths:*

- Your descriptive language creates a vivid picture of the scene, particularly with phrases like "rusty timeworn guitar" and "sweet flowing melody that felt like whipped buttercream"
- You establish atmosphere effectively through sensory details that help readers imagine the setting

*Awkward sentence construction* → The phrase "lay down of the dusty floor" mixes up prepositions, making it difficult to read smoothly. When you're describing where something is placed, you need to be precise with your word choices. This kind of error can confuse readers about what's actually happening in your scene.

*Exemplar: The rusty, timeworn guitar lay on the dusty floor, cracks running across its surface.*

## #2: Second Paragraph

*Strengths:*

- You connect the character's emotional journey to important life events, showing why this moment matters to Píca
- The details about his family situation help readers understand his loneliness and motivation

*Unclear connections between ideas* → Your paragraph jumps between different pieces of information without smooth links. For example, you move from Píca's decision to play guitar again, to no one celebrating with him, to his wife's situation, to his children leaving, then to revenge. Each idea is interesting, but they feel disconnected. When you write, think about how one sentence leads naturally to the next, like stepping stones across a stream.

*Exemplar: On his 79th birthday, Píca Pilarté sat alone in his empty house with no one to celebrate alongside him. His wife lay in hospital after suffering a major heart attack, whilst his children had moved to America, claiming their little Mexican home was too shabby. The*

*loneliness stirred something deep within him—a determination to prove his worth through music.*

### #3: Revelation Scene (Final Paragraph)

*Strengths:*

- You bring the story full circle by revealing the connection to Pedro Pilarté, which adds meaning to Píca's journey
- The emotional payoff with "happy tears" provides satisfying closure to the character's struggle

*Missing emotional depth in the climax* → This is the most important moment of your story—when Píca discovers the truth about his talent—but it feels rushed. You tell us he "gasped in amazement, and a bit of regret" and cried happy tears, but we don't experience these feelings with him. What did he think about? What memories flashed through his mind? How did his body feel? When you reach the peak moment in your writing, slow down and let readers feel what the character feels.

*Exemplar: Píca's hands trembled as he traced the elegant cursive engraving. Sixty-seven years. Sixty-seven years of believing he was worthless, when all along the blood of a master guitarist had flowed through his veins. His chest tightened with a mixture of joy and sorrow—joy at discovering his gift, sorrow for the decades lost to a teacher's cruel words. As tears rolled down his weathered cheeks, these weren't tears of pain, but of liberation.*

■ Your piece tells an emotionally engaging story about overcoming harsh words and discovering hidden truths. The basic structure works well—you set up a problem (the teacher's hurtful comment), show the consequences (67 years of avoiding music), and deliver a resolution (discovering his heritage). However, your writing would benefit from clearer organisation and deeper exploration of key moments.

The main area to strengthen is how you connect your ideas. Right now, your story sometimes jumps from one point to another without smooth transitions, which can confuse readers. For instance, in your second paragraph, you shift quickly between Píca's birthday, his family situation, his desire for revenge, and his practice routine. Think about adding sentences that bridge these ideas together, showing how one thought leads to the next.

Additionally, your most important scenes—especially the final revelation—need more space to breathe. When Sofia reveals the secret and Píca reads his great-great-great-grandfather's name, this should be the emotional heart of your story. Instead of rushing through it in a few sentences, expand this moment.

Show us what Píca is thinking and feeling in detail. What does it mean to him to discover this truth? How does it change the way he sees his entire life?

Another area to develop is the relationship between Píca and his guitar throughout the years. You mention he stopped playing at 12 and restarted at 79, but what happened during those 67 years? Did he ever think about the guitar? Was it hidden away, or did he see it every day as a painful reminder? Adding a sentence or two about this could make his decision to play again even more powerful.

Your descriptive language shows creativity, particularly phrases like "melody that felt like whipped buttercream" and "salty tears cascaded down." Keep using these imaginative comparisons, but make sure they always make sense and add to your reader's understanding. Also, be careful with your basic sentence construction—small errors with prepositions and word order can distract readers from your good ideas.

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**Overall Score: 41/50**

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## Section 2

### #1 Timeless Secrets

~~The rusty timeworn guitar lay down of the dusty floor, with cracks wide open.~~ [The rusty, timeworn guitar lay on the dusty floor, its cracks wide open.] The wrinkled guitarist tuned each guitar ~~strand~~ [string] meticulously, until he reached a sweet flowing melody that felt like whipped buttercream. A melancholy silence wafted across the empty room, each note resounding against the walls. Deep sighs accompanied the diminuendo attempted on the instrument. Something didn't feel right for him. The song would go ~~of~~ [out of] tune, [;] he would miss a note or play the wrong one. ~~It had been a long since playing it—67 years after trying to twang the guitar strings.~~ [It had been so long since he'd played it—67 years since his fingers had last plucked the guitar strings.] He ~~always~~ [had always] wanted to become a professional guitarist, but something ~~always~~ [had always] held him back from moving ~~on~~ [forwards], ~~a deep dark secret...~~ [: a deep, dark secret.]

#2 The moment he was told this secret, he gave up playing the guitar — [at the age of 12, utterly] ~~aged only 12~~, heartbroken. For days, his salty tears cascaded down ~~from~~ [his cheeks, streaming from] his

small eyes ~~for days~~. But all alone in his empty house, Píca Pilarté decided to start over again, [—] on his 79th birthday [—] ~~Only to see~~ [only to find] no one able to celebrate with him. His wife ~~was~~ [lay] in hospital after ~~experimenting~~ [experiencing] a major heart-attack, and [whilst] his children left [had left for] to America, thinking that their little house in Mexico was too shabby for them. The old man's old tears returned ~~back~~ but with great agony. He felt ~~like~~ he needed to seek revenge. For hours he practised his arpeggios, ~~scale~~ [scales] and classical pieces. At last, he found his deep passion for this musical instrument.

The secret was painful [;] it was etched into his brain and he tried to forget ~~about~~ what one of his ~~high-school teacher~~ [secondary school teachers] ~~said~~ [had said]. 'You're worthless, [;] you're a failure, and you will never succeed in playing any musical instrument ever again!' But there was another secret he did not know, which was the truth that contradicted the teacher's statement. He was gifted the guitar from the greatest guitarist of all time, ~~which—was~~ [who happened to be] his great-great-great-grandfather; [;] Pedro Pilarté.

#3 When Píca was ~~4~~ [four] years old, this magical guitar was given to him, and he played it seamlessly, without any training. His ~~parent~~ [parents] were wowed ~~with~~ [by] his great talent and ~~were~~ amazed. But ~~still had~~ [they still had] no idea ~~of~~ where he ~~learnt~~ [had learnt] these skills. They sent him to a tutor at age ~~6~~ [six], and she said that Píca was musically gifted from birth and that he could ~~some~~ [have inherited] ~~DNA~~ [musical ability] from Pedro Pilarté. All of a sudden, he heard a rhythmic knock at the front door. At last, he would see someone! As soon as he opened the door, he found himself greeting his musical tutor. She was even ~~more old~~ [older] and ~~wrinkled~~ [more wrinkled,] with a bony structure = [(~~keep in mind that~~ she was 91 years old[.].)

Píca's eyes widened and he gave Sofia a warm hug. She began to speak, [;] 'I have a secret for you, a desired secret. You are gifted musically from birth. And please check the neck of your ~~guitar.~~' [guitar."] Píca couldn't believe his ears. Then he carefully read the cursive etching on the neck of the guitar. It read 'Pedro Pilarté.' ~~he~~ [He] asked her who he was, and she explained ~~to him~~ the ~~scenario~~ [situation to him]. Píca gasped in amazement, [and felt a surge of regret.] ~~and a bit of regret.~~ ~~He felt like~~ [He felt that] he ~~wasted~~ [had wasted] 67 years believing a false judgement about ~~him~~ [himself], but he ~~wouldn't~~ [also realised he wouldn't] have been able to have this experience of unveiling the truth. Píca cried once again, except ~~it was~~ [this time they were] happy tears. The timeless secret was revealed...