

## Section 1

**#1: "After moving to his new home, Sam always had a sense of unease whenever he looked out of the window. But on this particular day, he knew that something was wrong. It wasn't his imagination, it was like a hidden replica of himself screaming to him that something was not right."**

### Strengths:

- You've created an intriguing opening that makes readers curious about what Sam is sensing
- The phrase "hidden replica of himself screaming" is imaginative and shows creative thinking

**Underdeveloped tension** → Your opening promises something mysterious, but the story doesn't follow through immediately. After this strong beginning, you shift to talking about porridge and Sam's mother, which feels disconnected. The "hidden replica" is mentioned again at the end, but readers might forget about it by then. To keep the tension strong, you could weave small reminders of this uneasy feeling throughout the story, perhaps describing how Sam feels distracted or nervous during his day at school.

**Exemplar:** *Throughout the day at school, Sam couldn't shake the feeling that something was watching him, waiting.*

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**#2: "School was the same. Sam went to a mean, run down little place called River Hill Boys and it was truly horrendous. The teachers were paid at the least possible so lessons were filled with screaming and pushing."**

### Strengths:

- You've painted a clear picture of an unpleasant school environment
- The name "River Hill Boys" connects nicely to the river symbolism at the end

**Vague descriptions** → When you write "lessons were filled with screaming and pushing," readers don't know who is screaming or pushing whom. Are the students pushing each other? Are teachers shouting? Instead of telling us the school is "horrendous," show us specific moments. For example, you

could describe a particular lesson where chaos breaks out, or show how Sam feels sitting in a classroom where nobody is learning. Specific details help readers experience the story rather than just being told about it.

**Exemplar:** *In maths class, three boys wrestled near the back whilst the exhausted teacher shouted over the noise, trying to explain fractions on the cracked whiteboard.*

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**#3: "He glanced to his right, and at that moment, it struck him like a bolt of lightning. Seeing the tiny replica of himself had done it. It showed his life. The river, spiralling towards the ocean, represented his life, reaching the top and then spreading open, like the river he had always seen."**

**Strengths:**

- You've attempted to create a meaningful ending that connects to the opening
- The river symbolism shows thoughtful planning

**Rushed revelation** → Your ending happens too quickly and needs clearer explanation. What does "reaching the top and then spreading open" actually mean for Sam's life? The connection between the model replica and the river needs more development. Take time to show Sam's thought process step by step. Perhaps he could notice how the model sitting on his desk looks small and contained, then look at the river flowing freely, and realise that his life doesn't have to stay trapped in one small, unhappy place.

**Exemplar:** *As Sam stared at the tiny model on his desk, frozen in one position, he looked back at the river flowing steadily forwards. His life didn't have to stay stuck like the model—it could keep moving, like the river, towards something bigger.*

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■ Your story has some interesting ideas, especially the connection between Sam's model-making and his realisation about life. However, the middle section feels disconnected from the beginning and end. You start with mystery and tension, but then spend most of the story describing Sam's ordinary bad day at school without linking it back to that opening feeling. Your readers need to understand why these events matter to Sam's bigger realisation. Additionally, your second paragraph introduces too much information at once—Sam's friend, the school conditions, the art class—which makes it feel crowded. Consider choosing just one or two details to explore more deeply rather than listing many

surface details. The ending revelation about the river needs more space to breathe. Right now, it feels like you're rushing to finish. Spend more time showing how Sam connects the dots between his model, the river, and his life. What specific thought helps him understand? Perhaps you could show him remembering specific moments from his day whilst looking at the river, then slowly piecing together what it means. Your first paragraph could also better prepare readers for the ending—maybe Sam could notice the river in the morning and feel drawn to it, creating a thread throughout the story.

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**Overall Score: 41/50**

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## Section 2

~~#1 After moving to his new home, Sam always had a sense of unease whenever he looked out of the window.~~ [After moving to his new home, Sam always felt a sense of unease whenever he looked out of the window.] But on this particular day, he knew that something was wrong. It wasn't his imagination [;] it was like a hidden replica of himself screaming to him that something was not right. Thinking of that, he wandered down the stairs hoping to breathe in the smell of warm porridge which meant breakfast was on the table. But there wasn't any [;] there will never be. Sam remembered how his mother used to make delicious porridge when he was six and quite coincidentally, his mother died when he was the same age. Since then, he has grown to believe in himself.

~~#2 School was the same. Sam went to a mean, run-down [run-down] little place called River Hill Boys and [ , and] it was truly horrendous. The teachers were paid at the least possible so lessons were filled with screaming and pushing.~~ [The teachers were paid the bare minimum, so lessons were filled with screaming and pushing.] Sam was quite a discreet boy and [ , and] his only friend was a shy person making [ , making] lunchtimes boring and ~~seen-to-last~~ [seemingly lasting] forever. It was Monday meaning ~~that~~ [ , meaning] there was ~~art and~~ [art, and] as usual, the teacher told them to do whatever they wanted to do. Sam found himself building a model of himself ~~and~~ [ , and] despite the ~~hand-me down~~ [hand-me-down] equipment, he actually quite liked trying to make the model look good.

On the walk back home, Sam thought that his prediction in the morning was right. At first, the teacher told him off for running down the corridor ~~which wasn't entirely true as he was just trying to run from the bullies.~~ [ , which wasn't entirely true, as he was merely trying to escape from the bullies.] On the

walk back, a tree fell~~and~~ [, and] Sam almost got injured, and finally, [. Finally,] some bullies stole his money!

When he finally got home, he felt like an explorer ~~that~~ [who] had discovered something new and then came back. In a way, he thought he had discovered something new, it [: being] ~~was-being~~ unlucky so many times. Sam threw his backpack on the ground and dragged himself into his room to do his homework. He glanced down at his questions.  $1.76 \times 89 = ?$  and  $2.37 \times 76 = ?$  He didn't see ~~anymore...~~ [any more...]

**#3** Sam stood up and glanced at his window. He saw the river [;] it was always there to remind him of something. He just couldn't piece it together. It seemed impossible that the pieces were in front of him but he couldn't figure it out. He glanced to his right, and at that moment, it struck him like a bolt of lightning. Seeing the tiny replica of himself had done it. It showed his life. The river, spiralling towards the ocean, represented his life, reaching the top and then spreading open, like the river he had always seen. At that moment, he thought that his life was a path, only continuing in the direction of his future.