

### Section 1:

#1 (Opening paragraph - May 3rd, 2014)

#### Strengths:

- Your opening creates immediate curiosity by having Natalie discover a mysterious photograph that mirrors her own childhood
- The visual details bring the photograph to life, particularly the description of the family members and their positioning

**Inconsistent Narrative Perspective** → Your writing shifts confusingly between past and present tense within the same scene. You write "Natalie had almost ignored it" and "she was here to arrange boxes," then switch to "The image seemed to hum" in present tense. This makes the timeline unclear for readers. Additionally, the phrase "her pink dress frilled at the ends like blueprints" uses an unusual comparison that doesn't help readers picture the dress clearly, as blueprints aren't typically associated with fabric frills.

**Exemplar:** *Natalie had almost ignored it at first. She was here to arrange boxes for her new house, not to search for heartfelt memories she had woven together with her family.*

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#2 (May 4th, 1990 - The accident sequence)

#### Strengths:

- Your writing captures the mother's panic effectively through the frantic questions: "What am I doing here? Shouldn't a real parent be sprinting towards them?"
- The emotional depth shown when Arthur cries reveals his character beyond the serious businessman facade

**Abrupt Scene Transitions** → The accident unfolds too quickly without enough description of what actually happens. You write "They were riding together at an uncontrollable speed towards the deepest lake in the state" but don't explain how Jake and Natalie ended up on the bike together or why they couldn't stop. The sentence "I couldn't bare to look at the lake, the floating images of my children drowning, or the pale hand of Jake reaching out of the water for help" creates confusion because if she can't look, how does she see these specific details? The rescue also happens very suddenly—Arthur disappears and reappears with the children without clear explanation of how he saved them both.

**Exemplar:** *I couldn't bear to approach the lake's edge, though I glimpsed Jake's pale hand reaching desperately from the water.*

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#3 (Final entry - September 5th, 2012)

**Strengths:**

- The metaphor comparing Natalie's hair to "sunlight on water, each strand a shiny diamond representing the memories" creates a lovely image
- Your ending brings the story full circle by connecting back to the photograph and its deeper meaning

**Unclear Conclusion** → The final section leaves readers confused about what has happened. You write "I hope they're healthy and well now" and "I finally rest in peace," which suggests the mother has died, but this isn't stated clearly. The phrase "The never-reaching tomorrow that never happened doesn't feel too distant now" is difficult to understand—what tomorrow are you referring to? The philosophical statement "we don't create memories using photographs to remember life - we remind memories to remember our lives" tries to sound meaningful but the wording is unclear. Saying we "remind memories" doesn't make logical sense, as memories are things we remember, not things that need reminding.

**Exemplar:** *Now I understand that we don't create memories through photographs to preserve life—we preserve photographs to honour the memories we've lived.*

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■ Your piece contains a touching story about family, danger, and survival, but it needs clearer explanations in several key moments. The accident scene happens too quickly, and readers need more detail about how the children ended up in the lake and how Arthur managed to save them both. Additionally, your ending should more directly explain what happens to the mother so readers aren't left guessing. The connection between young Natalie in 2014 and the family story also needs strengthening—currently, it's unclear why she's looking at this photo or how the 1990 events relate to her present situation. Consider adding a paragraph that explains whether the photo belongs to her family or someone else's, and why finding it matters to her now.

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**Score: 42/50**

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**Section 2:**

2014 May 3rd Tue

At first, Natalie had almost ignored it. She knew that she was here to arrange boxes for her new house, not looking for heartfelt memories that she had ~~waved~~ [woven] together with her family. She placed the old weathered box on top of another, but as she turned to repeat the process, her eyes darted to the photograph once more. The image seemed to hum with a melody of its own. It was a blurry image of a happy family standing in front of a heavenly landscape with fields of green stretching endlessly behind them. A blue bicycle lay ~~on~~ [at] a boy's feet with a bent front wheel, while [. Behind] behind him, a woman with warm, hazel eyes had a smile brighter than sunlight piercing through a dark room. Her arm was around a man in a black suit with a serious expression, yet his eyes seemed to have the slightest hint of joy. In front of him, his hands lay on the shoulders of a small girl with hair that matched her mother's, her pink dress frilled at the ends like blueprints. Natalie squinted. The girl in the picture looked oddly familiar-[—]like it was someone she knew. Her memory suddenly snapped at her...[—]it looked like herself, when she was younger. Not similar, but identical. She had the same pink bow ~~on~~ [in] her hair that Natalie had, while her dimples looked the same when she smiled. But something within her knew that it wasn't her. It was impossible. This looked like ~~this was~~ an image ~~in~~ [from] the 1990's, when she was about two years old. She stared at the photo again, observing the bottom of the paper.

'May 4th 1990 Wed, - Dad did an exam for his work and passed!' it read, the letters wobbly and messy like ~~it was~~ [they had been] scribbled by a five-year-old. The words echoed through the air, the photograph slipping out of her hands, flipping like coins in the air waiting to land on the table of tomorrow.

May 4th 1990, Wed

I sat cross-legged on the soft emerald grass, waiting to prepare the photo that would be framed on our wall tomorrow ~~in the morning~~. "Hurry up, Mum!" Natalie cried, her young innocent eyes eager for me. "Okay, okay, Nat, calm down. I'll be there soon. Just wait for me to adjust the angle so we get a perfect shot. Why don't you play with your brother Jake while you're waiting? Ask him for a ride on his bike, and he'll surely let you."

"Okay, Mum! Just be quick then!" Galloping away at full speed, I watched Jake teach her how to ride a ~~2-wheeled~~ [two-wheeled] bike. I smiled,[.] "If only this moment could last forever...' [forever,' ]I thought. By the time Natalie and Jake had turned back at [towards] me, I had finished adjusting the angle and preparing everything for our family photo. When I opened my mouth to tell them I was ready, moments of joy turned to horror. Arthur bolted towards them, dropping his expensive suitcase we had bought together. I looked forward. No...[—]Jake...[—]Natalie...[—]They were riding together at an uncontrollable speed towards the deepest lake in the state. This can't be happening...[—]they don't even know how to swim...[—]What am I doing here? Shouldn't a real parent be sprinting towards them? Seconds later, I ran towards them. Desperate, with a tiny ray of hope. But when I got there, the first thing I saw was my husband Arthur sighing with a tear rolling down from his face. I had never seen him cry before...he[—he] was always serious, talking about work ~~non-stop~~ [nonstop] ~~on~~ [at] the breakfast table, never even mentioning our kids' names. But behind this mask, now I saw what a devoted parent he was. "Elisa," he whispered. "Elisa, Elisa, Elisa...[—]" I put my hands to my

mouth, bullets of sweat still trickling down my forehead. I couldn't bare [bear] to look at the lake, the floating images of my children drowning, or the pale hand of Jake reaching out of the water for help. But I knew we both couldn't swim. We would both drown ourselves. "I'm sorry I couldn't get our children [to our children] in time." I opened my mouth to say something, but the words wouldn't budge. I knew things would be over-[—]the memories we made with our children and the happiness that was formed between everyone in our family. But with both of the children gone, everything would collapse. I covered my face with my sweaty hands, but when I removed them, Arthur was gone. And the only thing near me was a splash. "No," I whispered. "ARTHUR!" I screamed, my breath catching between my heart and my throat. I fell on the floor, and a glassy sapphire orb rolled down my eyelid. Would I have to continue my life alone now? Without any of my beloved family members? I knew for a fact that the light in my life had disappeared. The darkness I had experienced when I was a child would return once more. I picked up the camera that we had all bought together with our money combined-[—]Jake's, Natalie's, Arthur's and mine,[—]but now this was the only thing that would be a memory of our family. When I turned to gather our crimson-checked picnic mat, something strange rang like a bell in my ears. I looked behind me, to the lake. And I spotted a moving figure-[—]pink, black and blue all squashed together.

I dropped everything and rushed to the very edge of the lake as fast as my legs could carry me. "Jake! Natalie! ARTHUR!" I screamed until my lungs and my throat started to hurt. Then Arthur's head popped out, and his eyes were closed. A moment of horror approached me again, but I heard a voice, quiet yet so loud to my ears. "Elisa...[—]" I pulled his arm with all the strength I had. I didn't care if my arm hurt, or his did, as long as we were one big happy family again. After coughing out water they had swallowed, I asked, "Are you okay, everyone? Arthur, how did you rescue them? Jake, you pigeon, how did you even end up in the lake with Natalie? And Natalie...[—]" I'm sorry. I promise I will hurry up next time when taking a photo," I laughed, bursting into tears again. "Why are you crying, Mum?" asked Natalie with a confused expression. "Shouldn't you be happy if we're safe?" asked Jake. "I suppose so," I laughed again, wiping the tears off my face. "Let's all dry our clothes in the sun so we can take a final photo together," suggested Arthur, sharing his idea in front of us for the first time in years. When we took the photo, we returned home, and gazed up at the photo we had framed on our wall. When I left to cook dinner, I could hear the sound of the laughs and sadness echoing from the photo, like a melody pleasant yet ~~sophisticated~~ [sophisticated].

2 Decades and 2 Summers ~~later~~ [Later], September 5th 2012

I gaze up at the photo again. My darling Natalie's hair glimmers like sunlight on water, each strand a shiny diamond representing the memories of us together. As I look closely at my lovely Jake, he returns my smile, yet his ~~one~~ [smile] looks younger, brighter and less melancholy than I am. I hope they're healthy and well now. The never-reaching tomorrow that never happened doesn't feel too distant now. When I used to think that today's tomorrow would never happen, I guess I was wrong. Now, ~~I realize~~ [I realise] we don't create memories using photographs to remember life-[—]we remind memories to remember our lives. And with that, I finally rest in peace, hoping that my children will live their years beautifully. Goodbye, my dear Jake and Natalie...[—]I must go now. I hope you enjoy your lives like I did and remember the best times that were created in your lives.