

Section 1

#1: "I should have known the package wasn't for me the moment my eyes spotted my mother's cursive writing flowing impeccably on the cardboard cover. It was impossible, my mother has been dead for 6 months, which made receiving mail from her either a miracle or a clerical error."

Strengths:

- You've created an immediate hook that makes readers curious about the mysterious package
- The contrast between the beautiful handwriting and the impossible situation creates strong tension

Weakness: Telling rather than showing emotion → Your opening reveals the shocking detail about your mother's death quite directly, but doesn't let us feel your character's emotional response. When you write "It was impossible," you're simply stating a fact. What did your heart do when you saw that handwriting? Did your hands shake? Did time seem to stop? By adding these physical reactions and sensory details, you'll help readers experience the confusion and disbelief alongside your character, rather than just being told about it.

Exemplar: *My breath caught as I recognised the familiar loops and swirls—impossible, since Mum had been gone for six months. My hands trembled as I reached for the package, my mind refusing to accept what my eyes were seeing.*

#2: "I'm that perfectionist who likes to organise my room, sort my belongings in alphabetical order using folders, memorising expiry dates and ensuring that everything looks neat."

Strengths:

- You've given us concrete examples of the character's personality traits
- The specific details help us understand how different the character is from their mother

Weakness: List-like character description → This sentence reads like a list of traits rather than weaving these details naturally into the story. When you tell us "I'm that perfectionist who likes to

organise my room, sort my belongings in alphabetical order," it feels like you're pausing the story to explain your character. Instead, you could show these qualities through actions. Perhaps you could describe how you carefully placed the package on the table, aligning it with the corner, or how the messy packaging bothered you because it clashed with your neat surroundings.

Exemplar: *I placed the package on the marble table, automatically adjusting it so the edges lined up perfectly with the corner—just as every book on my shelf sat in alphabetical order, spines aligned, everything exactly where it belonged.*

#3: "It was the map of our town. Not the one that exists now. This was the town both me and my mother experienced – the one which had the substantial, grand library which was labelled 'The Palace of Infinite Doors,' the park marked 'The Nation of Flora,' my primary school that me and my friends dubbed 'The Polytechnic of Paradoxes.'"

Strengths:

- The renamed locations are imaginative and create a sense of wonder and magic
- You've connected the map back to shared memories with your mother, which adds emotional depth

Weakness: Rushed revelation of the map's significance → This discovery is the emotional heart of your story—a map showing how you and your mother saw the world—but it happens too quickly. You move from "It was the map of our town" to listing the renamed places without pausing to show us your character's reaction. What did you feel when you realised this wasn't just any map, but your mother's way of seeing the world? This moment deserves more space to breathe. Additionally, the phrase "both me and my mother experienced" is grammatically incorrect and should be "my mother and I experienced."

Exemplar: *My chest tightened as recognition dawned. This was our town—not as it appeared on any street directory, but as Mum and I had reimagined it together during our Saturday adventures.*

■ Your piece shows promising imagination, particularly in the concept of a mysterious package and a map that reimagines ordinary places. The idea of receiving something from a deceased parent is emotionally powerful, and the renamed locations hint at a beautiful relationship. However, your

writing would benefit from slowing down at the most important moments. You rush through the emotional beats—discovering your mother's handwriting, opening the package, and recognising the map's significance—when these are precisely the moments that deserve the most attention and detail.

Additionally, your character's personality as a perfectionist sometimes feels stated rather than demonstrated. Instead of telling us "I'm that perfectionist," show us through specific actions and observations. For example, you could describe how you methodically examined each signature on the package or how opening it with a butter knife felt wrong because you couldn't find the proper tool.

Your second paragraph works well because you show the character's nature through the counting ("seventeen times—I counted") and the contrast with how the mother would have behaved. Look for more opportunities like this throughout your piece. Also, consider varying your sentence structure—you have several sentences that follow the pattern of stating something and then explaining it with a dash or comma, which can become repetitive.

The final paragraph holds your strongest writing because the fantastical elements emerge naturally. Build on this strength by ensuring the emotional journey matches the creative journey. Your readers need to feel the weight of grief, curiosity, and wonder alongside your character, not just observe these feelings from a distance.

Overall Score: 40/50

Section 2:

~~I should have known the package wasn't for me the moment my eyes spotted my mother's cursive writing flowing impeccably on the cardboard cover.~~ [#1 I should have known the package wasn't for me the moment I spotted my mother's cursive handwriting flowing impeccably across the cardboard surface.] It was impossible,[—] my mother has [had] been dead for 6 [six] months, which made receiving [receiving] mail from her either a miracle or a clerical error. I examined the parcel closer. Signatures were carelessly scribbled in haste, and the stamps were yellowed and dried up, barely noticeable. I brushed my fingertips against the thick, crinkled cardboard – the corners were chipped, showing clear signs of wear and tear. I doubtfully stared at the package, perplexed ~~how~~ [about how] it had the right location and estimated delivery date printed on a smudged sticker. My organised mind

rotated endlessly in circles, pondering ~~about~~ how this could ~~potentially~~ [potentially] happen. Was it a miracle? I mean, it's ~~a possible~~ [possible], but it has never ~~occured~~ [occurred] ~~before to~~ [to] me ~~and and~~ ~~is not very likely~~ [, and it's unlikely]. Even if it was, I normally prepare myself for the worst. So I would say probably not. I'm not the sort of person lots of miracles happen to. ~~I'm that perfectionist who likes to organise my room, sort my belongings in alphabetical order using folders, memorising expiry dates and ensuring that everything looks neat.~~ [#2 I'm the sort of person who organises their room meticulously, sorts belongings in alphabetical order using folders, memorises expiry dates, and ensures everything looks neat.]

I left the parcel lying neglected on the marble table for ~~2~~ [two] days. I walked past it precisely seventeen times – I counted – before my curiosity took control and made me open it. My mum would have torn it ~~up~~ [open] immediately, scattering packing materials all over the room like confetti, covering ~~up~~ anything that ~~laid~~ [lay] in its grasp. I am nothing like my mother. Although I genetically inherited her dark brown hair and her inability to whistle, I don't ~~bear~~ [share] her spontaneous excitement.

When I finally slit the tape with a washed butter knife (I couldn't find the ~~package cutting ones~~ [proper scissors]), I found a map. It wasn't any ordinary map – ~~ones~~ [not the kind] that you buy from a ~~store~~ [shop] or ~~the ones~~ [that] you can download on your phones. It was a meticulously crafted hand-drawn map, with its ancient corners crumbling like rustic bread, the ink smudged and discoloured. Tiny illustrations filled ~~up~~ the margins: a compass rose that looked like a flower, a sea serpent coiled around the legend, mountains painted in such realistic detail that ~~it~~ [they] appeared ~~3-dimensional~~ [three-dimensional] – you could nearly feel their granite faces.

~~It was the map of our town. Not the one that exists now. This was the town both me and my mother experienced – the one which had the substantial, grand library which was labelled 'The Palace of Infinite Doors,' the park marked 'The Nation of Flora,' my primary school that me and my friends dubbed 'The Polytechnic of Paradoxes. I realised – every landmark had been renamed, reimagined and metamorphosed into something otherworldly.~~ [#3 It was a map of our town—not the one that exists now, but the town my mother and I had experienced together. The substantial, grand library was labelled 'The Palace of Infinite Doors,' the park marked 'The Nation of Flora,' and my primary school that my friends and I had dubbed 'The Polytechnic of Paradoxes.' I realised that every landmark had been renamed, reimagined, and metamorphosed into something otherworldly.]