

Section 1

#1: "Mother, what is this mysterious package sitting on the kitchen table? I feel a little tremor of trepidation, as if it has a heart of its own."

Strengths:

- You've created an engaging opening that immediately draws readers in with the direct address to "Mother"
- Your word choice "tremor of trepidation" creates a strong sense of unease and sets the mood effectively

Unclear pronoun reference → When you write "as if it has a heart of its own," the "it" could refer to either the package or the tremor. This makes your sentence confusing because readers aren't sure what exactly has the heart. The comparison would be stronger if you clearly connected it to the package.

Exemplar: *"I feel a little tremor of trepidation, as if the package itself has a heart of its own."*

#2: "Mother, help. I am not you. No, I have not inherited anything except your brown hair and your ability to whistle like a delicate bird. My anxiety has only deepened, and my pile of alphabetical ordered receipts are still in my drawer, dust gathering around the surface."

Strengths:

- You've revealed interesting details about the narrator's character through specific examples like the receipts
- The contrast between what was inherited and what wasn't creates emotional depth

Disconnected ideas → Your sentences jump from anxiety to receipts without showing how these ideas connect. The receipts seem to relate to the mother's organised nature, but you haven't explained why this matters to the package situation or the narrator's feelings right now. This leaves readers confused about the point you're making.

***Exemplar:** "My anxiety has only deepened—I still keep my pile of alphabetically ordered receipts in my drawer, dust gathering around the surface, trying to maintain the order you once had."*

#3: "But I am sorry. Mother, this is not the real town, didn't you know? I am not the one who noticed that Mrs Hendersons garden bloomed in a coloured sequence, or that the trees perfectly formed a holy arch. You have noticed every single detail, yet I am still walking through a route 13 times."

Strengths:

- You've shown a meaningful difference between mother and narrator through specific observations
- The repetition of walking the same route is a powerful image of the narrator's limitations

Incomplete thought → Your piece ends mid-sentence with "This is how you," which leaves readers hanging without understanding what you wanted to say. Additionally, the phrase "I am still walking through a route 13 times" is confusing—do you mean the narrator walks the same route repeatedly, or something else? The meaning isn't clear, which weakens your ending.

***Exemplar:** "You noticed every single detail, yet I am still walking the same route over and over, unable to see what you saw."*

■ Your piece shows genuine emotion and creates an interesting relationship between the narrator and the absent mother. The direct address format works well and makes the writing feel personal and urgent. However, your ideas need stronger connections between them. You jump from the package to anxiety to receipts to the map without showing readers how these pieces fit together. Think about adding sentences that bridge your ideas—for example, after mentioning the receipts, you could explain that this shows you're trying to be like your mother but failing. Also, your ending feels rushed and incomplete. Take time to develop the final revelation about the map and what it means for the narrator. The specific details you include (like Mrs Henderson's garden and the butterknife) are wonderful, but you need to explain their significance more clearly. Additionally, some of your sentences are quite long and could be broken into shorter ones for better clarity. Focus on making each paragraph build logically to the next, and ensure every detail you include connects back to your main emotional thread about the narrator's relationship with their mother.

Overall Score: 42/50

Section 2:

#1 Mother, what is this mysterious package sitting on the kitchen table? I feel a little tremor of trepidation, as if ~~it~~[the package itself] has a heart of its own.

Mother, I am scared. I am terrified. Its gaze is so strong and threatening, yet I feel my mind and hands pulling closer to the tape out of curiosity.

#2 Mother, help. I am not you. No, I have not inherited anything except your brown hair and your ability to whistle like a delicate bird. My anxiety has only deepened, and my pile of ~~alphabetical~~[alphabetically] ordered receipts are still in my drawer, dust gathering around the surface.

Happiness is strong, Mother, but not strong enough to keep you alive.

I shall open the package. I must open the package. It has stayed there long enough, no, beyond long. It has stayed there for two days, but the box's anchor of stubbornness is not moving. I'm sorry, but I will open it.

I will use the butterknife you so dearly cherished, because the scissors could not be found. I will cut open the tape with caution, but I promise, your butterknife won't be broken. It will still gleam with elegance, and its smile would not change one sparkle.

I've opened it. Everything has gone just as I pictured it would be like. The butterknife still lies on the table, sunbathing under the dappled sunlight seeping through the moth-eaten curtains.

But what did I find, Mother? I found a map like no other. Its paper's texture is soft, almost imitating a piece of fabric. What does it say? Hmmm.... Oh!

The Palace of Infinite Doors.

At the bottom, you wrote something ~~I have~~[which I've now] read ~~it~~.

"For Emma. This is the real map. The other one just shows you where things are."

Mother! You drew this! What fine skills you have!

#3 But I am sorry. Mother, this is not the real town, didn't you know? I am not the one who noticed that Mrs ~~Hendersons~~[Henderson's] garden bloomed in a coloured sequence, or that the trees perfectly formed a holy arch. You have noticed every single detail, yet I am still walking ~~through a route~~[the same route] ~~13 times~~[over and over again]. ~~This is how you~~[This is how you saw the world—with wonder and precision—and I'm only beginning to understand.]