

## Section 1

### #1: Opening Scene (First two paragraphs)

#### Strengths:

- Your opening creates a clear mood through simple but effective details. The cold, untouched coffee mugs immediately show us that something is wrong between these characters.
- The plant works well as a symbol. It gives the characters something to talk about while hinting at deeper meanings about their relationship.

**Weak Transition** → The jump from the coffee mugs to the plant feels sudden. You move from describing the café setting to Rebecca touching the plant without connecting these moments smoothly. A sentence showing Rebecca noticing the plant or shifting her attention would help your readers follow the action more naturally. Right now, it feels like the camera cuts from one shot to another without warning.

**Exemplar:** *Rebecca's eyes drifted from her untouched coffee to the struggling plant on the windowsill, and she reached out to touch its dulling leaves.*

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### #2: Character Description (Paragraph beginning "They both smiled...")

#### Strengths:

- You show the differences between the characters effectively. The detail about Rebecca checking her phone helps us understand her without you having to explain everything directly.
- The contrast between "sharp and observant" versus "softer" gives us a quick picture of how they've changed.

**Missing Motivation** → You tell us that Haylee thinks Rebecca is "waiting for the right moment to leave... again," but you haven't shown us enough about why Rebecca left before or what makes Haylee think this. Your readers need more information about their past to understand the weight of this moment. Without knowing what happened between them, the tension feels less meaningful.

***Exemplar:** Haylee noticed how she checked her phone constantly, the same nervous habit she'd had the week before she moved away—like she was already planning her escape.*

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### #3: Ending (Final two paragraphs)

#### Strengths:

- The circular ending with the plant works nicely. You bring the story back to where it started, which creates a sense of completion.
- Leaving some uncertainty ("she wasn't sure if she'd imagined it") feels right for this kind of emotional story.

**Unclear Resolution** → Your ending leaves us wondering what actually happened between Rebecca and Haylee, and not in a good way. Throughout the story, you hint at something important—Rebecca leaving, an apology, something that "wasn't me"—but you never give your readers enough information to understand the situation. The plant standing taller is a nice image, but we need to know more about what Haylee has survived or overcome for this moment to feel earned.

***Exemplar:** As Rebecca left, Haylee sat back down, running her fingers along the plant's leaves. After months of watering it alone, speaking to it in an empty flat, maybe it had finally sensed she was ready to let someone leave without falling apart.*

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■ Your piece has a gentle, emotional tone that suits the reunion between old friends or former partners. The plant works as a connecting thread throughout, and your dialogue feels natural. However, your story needs more substance. Right now, you're hinting at a deeper history without actually showing it. Your readers need to understand what happened between Rebecca and Haylee—why Rebecca left, what she's apologising for, why this meeting matters. Additionally, your character descriptions could be stronger. Instead of simply telling us Haylee "looked softer" or had "been through things words couldn't explain," show us specific details—perhaps her worn hands, the way she holds herself, or something she says that reveals her experience. Also, your pacing feels rushed in places. The middle section where they discuss the plant could be expanded to build more tension before Rebecca tries to leave. Think about adding another exchange between them that reveals more about their relationship. Finally, consider whether the ending truly resolves anything for Haylee. Does the plant standing taller

show us that she's changed or grown? Make that connection clearer so your readers understand what this reunion means for her future.

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**Score: 42/50**

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## Section 2:

They met in a café neither of them used to like. The coffee mugs sat cold and untouched.

Rebecca ~~reached out to touch~~ [noticed] the plant ~~'s~~ [on the windowsill and reached out to touch its] dulling leaves. The edges were faded black, and the stems drooped slightly.

#1 "You kept it alive," she said, raising an eyebrow.

"I had to. It almost gave up on me." Haylee chuckled, the dimples appearing on her cheeks.

They both smiled, but never looked up. The years had settled differently on them - [—] Rebecca was sharp and observant, sitting straighter than she used to. Haylee noticed how she checked her phone constantly, like she was waiting for the right moment to leave... again.

#2 Haylee, on the other hand, looked softer - [—] like she'd been through things words couldn't explain.

"Well," Rebecca said finally, "it grew."

Haylee shrugged. "Was it supposed to stay small, though?"

Rebecca laughed, and Haylee smiled politely. But inside, she heard the sound of real laughter - [—] the kind that she used to hear every day.

Rebecca suddenly glanced at her phone and reached for her jacket.

"You're not leaving me again, are you?" Haylee whispered, looking down.

Rebecca stopped.

"I'm sorry. Really. It wasn't me, I just..."

"I know," Haylee said, hearing the panic in her own voice. "I just wish it never happened."

They locked eyes, gleaming and wet with tears.

As they stood to go, Rebecca grabbed her jacket.

"You keep it," she said. "It'll be better off with you."

Haylee didn't argue. She nodded, smiling weakly as she said goodbye.

**#3** As Rebecca left, Haylee sat back down. And she wasn't sure if she'd imagined it, but the plant seemed to stand a little taller.