

## Section 1

### #1: Opening Scene (First Paragraph)

#### Strengths:

- Your opening creates immediate tension with Taylor's physical reaction ("shaking from head to toe"), which draws readers into the story quickly.
- The damaged guitar detail (broken strings and holes in wood) gives us a clear picture of the problem right away.

**Weakness: Unclear Scene Setting** → The opening paragraph jumps between several ideas without clearly establishing where we are or what's happening. You mention "the doctor" when you mean a guitar repairer, which confuses readers about the type of professional Taylor visits. The phrase "Her hair was ruffled by running through the leaves" appears suddenly without connection to the repair shop scene. Then you shift to telling us about Taylor's reputation before returning to her waiting. This makes readers work too hard to understand the basic situation. When you begin a story, readers need to know the "where" and "what's happening" before jumping to backstory or extra details.

**Exemplar:** *"Can you fix it?" Taylor's hands trembled as she showed the repairer her damaged guitar. Broken strings hung loose, and several holes punctured the wood. She handed over the rustic instrument and sat in the waiting area, wondering if it could truly be saved.*

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### #2: The Flashback (Second and Third Paragraphs)

#### Strengths:

- You provide important background about Taylor's father and why music matters to her, which helps readers understand her emotional connection to the guitar.
- The mysterious house with different themed rooms creates an interesting setting for Taylor's discovery.

**Weakness: Rushed Emotional Moments** → The most important parts of your story—Taylor discovering the instruments and remembering her father—happen too quickly. You write "flash!

Fragments of her childhood pop into her mind as she was unconscious" and then immediately explain her entire backstory in three sentences. This major emotional moment, where Taylor reconnects with her childhood dream, deserves more space. Readers need to feel the weight of her father's struggles and death, and understand why she abandoned music. Similarly, when she finds the mouldy instruments, you write "Her knees came crashing down like a wave" and "Tears ran down her dusty cheeks," but we don't learn what she's thinking or feeling beyond the physical actions. Slowing down these moments and showing Taylor's thoughts would make readers care more about whether she achieves her dream.

**Exemplar:** *As Taylor turned the musical note doorknob, memories flooded back. She could almost hear her father's guitar echoing through their old house, could see his smile as he played. But she also remembered the later years—watching him struggle with hearing loss, seeing the pain in his hands, finding him exhausted and anxious after performances. When he died, she'd promised herself she'd never risk that same suffering. Standing in this dusty room now, staring at the mouldy instruments, those fears came rushing back.*

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### #3: The Resolution (Final Two Paragraphs)

#### Strengths:

- You show Taylor taking action to solve her problem instead of giving up, which demonstrates her character growth.
- The ending shows optimism about Taylor's future without claiming she becomes instantly famous.

**Weakness: Missing Steps in the Story** → Your ending skips over the most interesting parts of Taylor's journey. You write "All of a sudden, Taylor realised she could still fix it!" but we don't learn what changed her mind or gave her this realisation. Then "Many minutes had gone by" and suddenly the guitar is fixed and "unrecognisable"—but we don't see the actual repair or Taylor's reaction when she first sees it working. Most importantly, you jump straight from getting the guitar back to "She went to the nearest country show competition and won!" without showing us Taylor learning to play, practising, or even entering the competition. These missing pieces are where the real story lives. Readers want to see Taylor overcome her fears, struggle with learning, and earn her victory. Without these steps, the ending feels like you've told us the conclusion without showing us the journey.

**Exemplar:** *For the next three weeks, Taylor practised every evening. Her fingers hurt from pressing the strings, and the chords sounded rough at first. Sometimes she wanted to quit,*

*remembering her father's pain. But each time she considered giving up, she remembered his joy when he played, not just his suffering. When competition day arrived, her hands shook as she walked onto the stage. She wasn't perfect, and she didn't win first place—but she'd done it. She'd faced her fear and played music again.*

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■ Your story contains a meaningful theme about overcoming fear and pursuing dreams despite past pain. The core idea—Taylor discovering her father's passion and choosing to honour it—has real emotional potential. However, your piece moves too quickly through the most important moments, which makes it difficult for readers to connect with Taylor's journey.

The main area to strengthen is pacing. You've written a story that covers several days or weeks in just five paragraphs, which means you're summarising events rather than showing them unfold. Your opening paragraph tries to include too many details at once (the repair shop, Taylor's appearance, her reputation, her doubts), when it should focus on establishing one clear scene. The middle section rushes through Taylor's entire childhood, her father's death, finding the house, and discovering the instruments—each of these deserves more attention. Your ending tells us "she won" without showing us the competition or Taylor's performance.

To improve this piece, choose which scenes matter most to your story and expand them. For example, you might show Taylor actually exploring the mysterious house room by room, building suspense before she finds the music room. You could write a scene where she sits in the repair shop remembering specific moments with her father—perhaps a particular song he played, or advice he gave her. Additionally, you might show Taylor's first practice session with the repaired guitar, letting readers experience her nervousness and gradual confidence.

Your writing also needs clearer connections between ideas. Sentences like "Her hair was ruffled by running through the leaves" appear without explaining when or why this happened. The phrase "Everyone knew Taylor Anderson, but no-one knew her love for music until now" raises questions—who is everyone, and how do they know her now? Adding these connecting details will help your story flow more smoothly. Focus on one scene at a time, slow down during emotional moments, and show readers Taylor's journey rather than summarising it.

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**Overall Score: 38/50**

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## Section 2

#1 "Can you fix it?" Taylor exclaimed as she ~~was shaking~~ [shook] from head to toe ~~as she~~ [, showing] ~~showed~~ the ~~doctor~~ [repairer] the damage. ~~I~~ [The guitar] had ~~strings~~ [broken strings] ~~broken~~ and holes in the wood. Taylor handed ~~the rustic guitar~~ [over the instrument] and anxiously waited. ~~Her hair was ruffled by running through the leaves. Everyone knew Taylor Anderson, but no one knew her love for music until now.~~ [Earlier that day, she'd run through the forest with leaves catching in her hair, desperate to find help.] Taylor sat in a ~~new~~ [worn] chair near the reception, pondering if this was really worth waiting and fighting for?

#2 A day earlier, Taylor, a scavenger, rustled through the leaves. She ~~only thought of life~~ [spent her days searching for forgotten treasures]. Taylor liked to be solo, but always wished for a friend [—] ~~of any kind~~ [someone to share her discoveries with]. ~~Taylor was searching the lands, looking for a companion, when~~ [As she explored,] she stumbled across an eerie house [filled with bizarre items—one room held] ~~full of bizarre items. In one room were~~ toy elephants, another ~~piles and piles of~~ [contained towering stacks of yellowed] ~~towering~~ paper, until. Finally, one room caught her eye. It had a doorknob in ~~a~~ [the] shape of a musical note, and then flash! [. The moment she touched it, memories flashed through her mind.] Fragments of her childhood ~~pop~~ [flooded back—her father, a world-renowned guitar player, performing on stages across the country. Taylor had once dreamed of following in his footsteps.] ~~into her mind as she was unconscious. Taylor's father was a world-famous guitar player, and Taylor dreamed of a life like that too.~~ Sadly, ~~2~~ [two] years ~~had gone by and~~ [into his career,] her ~~dad's~~ [father's] life ~~had been~~ [became] full of anxiety, depression, hearing loss ~~and~~ [, and] muscle strain. ~~Another 2 year~~ [Two years] later, he passed away. Fearing ~~for~~ the worst, she ~~never for filled~~ [had never fulfilled] that dream.

#3 Hours had passed, and all of a sudden [before] she awoke and ~~busted~~ [pushed open] the door. She had lost all her fear, she was [—she felt] fearless! She ran through the door only to find the instruments all covered in mould! Her knees ~~came crashing~~ [crashed] down ~~like a wave~~ on the squeaky floorboards. Tears ran down her dusty cheeks as she sobbed in the frightening room of instruments.

All of a sudden, Taylor ~~realised~~ [realised] she could still fix it! She ran to the nearest ~~carpenter~~ [instrument repairer] and pleaded for it to be repaired immediately. Many minutes had gone by, and the guitar was nowhere in Taylor's sight, and [.] ~~things~~ [Things] weren't looking good.

In a flash, the repairer came out with a [the] guitar, it [. It] was unrecognisable. She grabbed it and jumped for joy, but things weren't over just yet. She went to the nearest country show competition and won! Likewise, she [She] may not be a famous artist yet, but now she was living her life!