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Portugal

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Dear Mimi,

Let me tell you how things are working out at home, considering how much has changed over the last year.

As soon as my brothers get home from school, they lock themselves in their room and play games with their friends.

They don't even come down for dinner. My dad eats in front of the TV, watching his 'must-see' crime series, and my mum paces back and forth, sorting out work issues on her phone. I eat my meal alone at the kitchen table, almost always thinking of you or the chores I must do. As soon as I lost you, my family became more attentive, but, as time went by, everything went back to the way it was before.

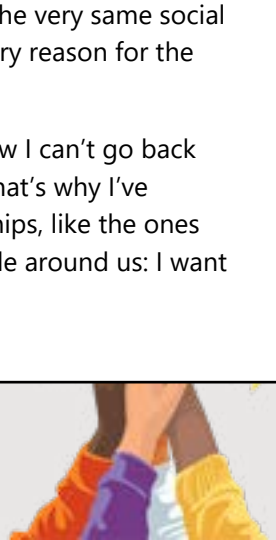
I think of you wherever I go.

Today I was left on my own at school during all the breaks, as our friends were busy filming a new viral dance routine to post on social media. They say my decision to stop taking part in this sort of thing was extreme, but after everything that's happened, I couldn't have done anything else. Wherever I go, I see the impact of new technologies: people on their mobile phones, young people discussing the latest fashion trends… it's now unthinkable to live without them in today's world, but I know that, because of this, many people are unaware of what's happening around them in real life.

You know very well that I was one of them, my dear Mimi, and that's why I didn't notice what was happening to you. If I'd listened to your pleas for us to have deeper conversations instead of debating this or that trend, if I'd looked more closely into your eyes, which changed so quickly from joyful to sorrowful, if I'd been more sensitive to your cries for help... you would never have done what you did. We were physically close, but I wasn't really there.

I remember when you showed me photos of models and asked if you were as pretty as them, when you regretted not being as happy and popular as this or that girl on social media, and when you'd get anxious wondering whether that boy you liked had liked your posts or not. I didn't realise, Mimi, that all this was only making you feel increasingly unhappy with yourself, let alone that the very same social media that brings together hearts separated by thousands of miles would be the very reason for the separation of ours, forever.

It's been a year since then, but the pain remains just as excruciating as before. I know I can't go back and change what happened, but I can act differently when it comes to the future. That's why I've decided to be more attentive to those around me. I don't want superficial relationships, like the ones we have at home, where we're too busy with our mobile phones to notice the people around us: I want to be genuinely present and free myself from distractions.



Instead of discussing these new, superfluous trends, I've been trying to talk about more serious matters with our friends – such as comparing ourselves to others, insecurities, and the pain of losing you… because I know that no new invention or technology can replace the comfort of a shoulder to lean on and a friendly hug. I've also been having coffee with your sister regularly. She was really shaken after your departure, and our get-togethers have done her good. Sometimes we laugh, other times we cry… but the most important thing is that we feel and are going through the same thing, which, in a way, is a comfort to both of us.

I just hope you can forgive me for not having done all this sooner; Mimi, forgive me for not being the friend you deserved. Forgive me, because I could have prevented all this.

I promise that, if there is a life beyond this one, we will remain friends and I will be there for you as much as I possibly can. I hope that, though it is highly unlikely, you will be able to read this letter I am writing from up there in Heaven and watch over me with those kind eyes that only you have.

A hug from yours, always yours,

Samily.