**A letter to my loving parents**

**[Zara Maqbool](https://www.nation.com.pk/columnist/zara-maqbool)**

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My dearest Mama and Baba. Bhai keeps teasing me that you both love him more than you love me. That can’t be true, can it? I fight with him every time he tells me that he is your favourite child because he is a boy and your only son. I tell him that it can’t be true. Mama, he tells me that you sneak him a few chocolates now and then when I am not looking. Baba, he says that you sit with him and tell him that he makes you proud and you expect the best from him. He gets more hugs and a pat on the back. I know you hug and kiss him more but that’s because he is cuddlier than I am, isn’t it?

It’s also true that he is the funny and friendly one unlike me who is the ‘silent’ one known in the family. Mama, you call me ‘sulky sara’ out of love, don’t you? You only forget to hug me at times because I am so skinny; all bones and not pretty enough to hug aren’t I? Baba doesn’t bother to ask me about my studies because I don’t do well. It’s not his fault that I am dumb and lazy and not hard working and get such bad results. I do try even though I know you both don’t believe me. But when exams come, I get so scared and nervous that I forget all that I have learned and I become confused.

[Death toll from Russian missile strike in Ukraine’s Zaporizhzhia rises to 13](https://www.nation.com.pk/06-Mar-2023/death-toll-from-russian-missile-strike-in-ukraine-s-zaporizhzhia-rises-to-13)

I am not making an excuse mama and baba. I am not lying. Trust me, I do try hard but I don’t know what happens when exams come. I know you both think that I am very stubborn and difficult and that’s why I hardly have any friends. I know Bhai is more friendly and that’s why he is so easy to like and love. I know you believe that I don’t try hard enough but I do, I promise. I try to reach out to class fellows in school, but you know it’s a new school and everyone already has their friends. No one wants to play with me in school, mama. I do try and tell my class fellows I will say yes to anything they say as long as they let me play with them but they all laugh. So now I sit alone at lunchtime and I don’t bother anyone. I don’t talk to anyone in school or at home. My teachers don’t care but why don’t you care enough to ask when I don’t say a word at times at home? When I am silently watching TV or staying in my room for hours?

[PTI approaches SC for Imran's appearance in courts through video link](https://www.nation.com.pk/06-Mar-2023/pti-approaches-sc-for-imran-s-appearance-in-courts-through-video-link)

Can’t you see I am pretending to watch while you and Bhai play chess? Remember when I asked if I could play and all three of you laughed at me? You do scold me more than Bhai but you say that it’s for my good so I don’t allow myself to think too much about it, but it hurts quite a good deal. At night when I can’t sleep, I wonder if you both will miss me if I die. Sometimes I wish I could die and then watch how much you both will cry. You will miss me if I die, won’t you mama and baba? Or is Bhai enough for you? Do you need me? Do you ever wonder if I am happy? Why don’t you ask me if I am happy? Why don’t you ask me when I don’t eat properly or my eyes are all swollen in the morning? Why does my tummy hurt every morning when I have to go to school? Can’t you love me a little more so I can shut Bhai up? He calls me a coward and you all make fun of me. I am not a coward mama and baba. I am very brave. I can do anything I like. I promise you, I can, even if you think I can’t. I heard the other day in a movie that only the brave ones are not scared of death. Will you miss me if I am gone? Will you be proud of me too if I am not scared of death? I am not scared of dying mama and baba. I am scared of living.

[Veteran TV actor Qavi Khan passes away aged 80](https://www.nation.com.pk/06-Mar-2023/veteran-tv-actor-qavi-khan-passes-away-aged-80)

Your brave child.

(Suicide is one of the leading causes of death for children, adolescents, and young adults aged 15-to-24-year-olds.)

Note: This letter is fictitious, written by the writer as a means to convey the impact of parental focus on children.