The pink envelope

The day of the first letter was a Monday. Monday the 17th of December 2015. Now it's the 24th - Christmas Eve and I am sat behind the rusting front door, the winter breeze blowing through the creaking bronze letter box and turning my nose bright red and icy cold. I hear the clump, crush, clump, crush of the half-asleep postman stomping through the fresh morning snow up to the door. I duck into the empty coat cupboard before he can see me and wait nervously, holding my breath until . . . I hear it. A reassuring soft thud.

When I peer around the cupboard door, I am filled with joy to see, on top of advertisements and years old bills there is an envelope. It is bright pink with the adress written in swirly blue ~~written~~ writing and a festive christmas stamp in the top corner. Fingers trembling, I pick it up and turn it in my hands to see PRIVATE written on the back. I make my way into the once cheerful but now tired and grey living room. I sit hurriedly on the faded sagging sofa and with shaking fingers I open the envelope and pull out the piece of white card, the letter. I am instantly filled with comfort and I can as good as see my loneliness fly out the snow-frosted window. I cast my eyes to the page and read...

Dear Maddie,

I know you're not reading this but it feels nice writing to you, it makes me feel less lonely, like I have a friend and it means I can forget - for a minute or two - about everything happening here. I miss you every day and I have thought of you each morning for five years now. Yet it is still mad to think you would currently be fifteen and we would be at secondary school together. I am sure, certain that we would be as close as sisters can be.

It is pretty tense at home at the moment because ... well I don't really want to write it but ... tomorrow you will've been missing for five years. Mum can't stop crying and Dad insists the house needs hoovering over and over again. I am sure that this Christmas will be just as awful and upsetting as the year before and the year before that ... But never as bad as Christmas 2010. The Christmas I will always remember. When you were 10 and I was 6. The worst Christmas ever. The Christmas when you

went missing and didn't come back...

I can't read any further. The words blur as tears fall like snowflakes down my face. I look up to the mantelpiece and gaze at a picture of two girls smiling from ear to ear. One is 10 and the other is 6.