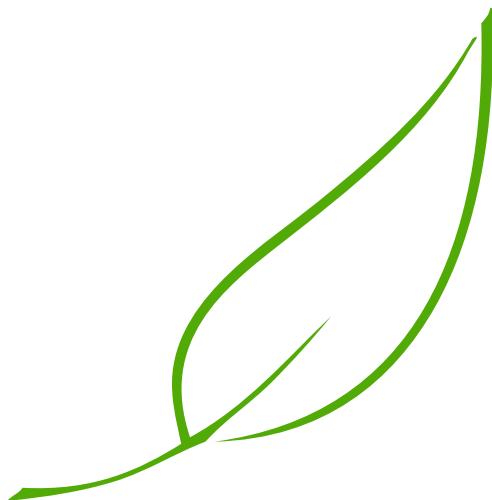


DEAR VIRGINIA

by Ken Bradbury



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The year was 1897 and an eight-year-old girl in New York asked her father if there was really a Santa Claus. Her father suggested she write a letter to New York's biggest newspaper, The Sun. The letter landed on the desk of Francis Church, a writer who'd seen the suffering in the Civil War. He saw people seem to lose their hope. They felt helpless. So he wrote an answer, "Yes Virginia, there is a Santa Claus" and it's still the most reprinted editorial ever to appear in a newspaper.

Our nation has been hit with a series of senseless tragedies where unstable people have brought much suffering to others. Perhaps Virginia needs another letter.

Dear Virginia ... even though your name may be Jayson or Jenny or Brittany, you once asked if there was a Santa Claus and someone gave you an answer. But this time you may have another question: Why do people do bad things?

Something really bad happened in several schools and other places around our country, and if you were like me, you've been very sad even though we didn't know any of the kids or teachers involved.

Some people think that we need to do something about guns. I don't know much about that. Maybe we do and maybe we don't. But whether we should make new laws or not, this will take a very long time to decide. We've been talking about this for a long time and we will probably keep talking. No matter what, you and I can't do much about that.



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