

Dear Mrs. Sylvanie Williams,

America in 2023 is a far cry from what you experienced in 1921. Many, many things have changed. You would probably be proud. I am proud. There is no doubt we've changed for the better from the America you knew.

I suppose a catch up is necessary, yes? You must know about what has happened and what continues to happen before we discuss. This – knowledge – has been a large issue in recent years and even before. Since your time one hundred years ago to even now, there have always been groups of people who believe they know best based on false information and who act extremely and violently because of this belief.

Some examples of this can be drawn from recent incredible happenings. Just barely two years ago, on January 6, 2021, there was an insurrection at our nation's Capital. People with far-right beliefs around a political group known as MAGA (Make America Great Again) scaled walls, broke down doors and windows, and beat policemen in an attempt to harm, hang, or kill politicians who disagreed with their beliefs. This was brought about by the President they supported losing out on a second term for office. Even now, two years later, followers of MAGA are still claiming the election was rigged, saying that the former President is not, in fact, former.

As an avid history lover, I've read of coups both attempted and successful, so seeing this happen was terrifying to see. America, what I have known since kindergarten as a pillar of democracy and stability, was having a non-peaceful transition of power for the first time ever.

Something else equally horrifying is the book bans. In America, some state governments are banning books. Entire tomes of different experiences, cultures, and belief systems not aligning with the MAGA beliefs are banned from schools and libraries. Introspective stories about where society could go and all sorts of children's books showing the beauty of different cultures: banned. Information and truths: banned.

I don't intend to paint the picture that America is an awful place. It's not. Compared to the 1920s, our circumstances are incredible. Most people have access to a functioning toilet and an automobile. Trains, cars, and ships are all far more advanced and safer. Many people have relatively safe housing and the money to buy food, clothes, and school supplies. We now have things called cell phones, which are portable devices that can be used to send a message across the world in an instant.

Now, more often than not, people have more than two or three pairs of shoes. Now, more often than not, one has access to a shower that can be turned on with the press of a button. Now, more often than not, drinking water is safe. Now, relatively often, people are respected and have the ability to make decisions for themselves, with the big exception of women in regards to giving birth.

The fact of the matter is, we have made worlds of progress, but we're behind where we could be. The circumstances you were born to and what you look like are still the most important factor of any American's life. Even one hundred years later, people are still willing to keep what they have and take more, to the detriment of others. More often than not, people still choose violence before conversation.

Mrs. Williams, America now is a far cry from what you experienced one hundred years ago. As I said at the beginning, you would probably be proud. Even with our problems, I am proud, and rightfully so. Despite that, I know that we are hurting more people than we are helping. I know that nothing is perfect, and we still have a long way to go.

You will find that our flowers have never stopped being mistreated and trampled – yet we are advancing. We may not be further on than you might have expected, but we will never let our flowers die.

Thank you for all you did,

An Admirer from the Future

Sophia Foster