

Dear Boots,



Texas
Life

By Anna Mitchael

Questions from Deep in the Heart of Texas

**Dear Boots,
A debate is raging at our
house, and I'm curious to
know where you stand.
When it comes to the candy
of the season, do you vote
Peeps or peanut butter eggs?**

- Sugar Hi

Dear Sugar Hi,

Let Granny take a seat in the rocking chair and pull up my hot cocoa while I tuck my blanket around my knees so I can tell you kiddies a story. You'll never believe it, but back when I was a wee lass, there were candies that *they only sold at Easter*.

Peanut butter eggs did not take the form of a heart at Valentine's Day. Or a tree at Christmas. Come October, there were no peanut butter pumpkins.

The first week that Peeps were

sold at the grocery store, people would race home to call from their *landline phones* and leave messages on *answering machines* notifying their friends that the Peeps were here! The Peeps were here!

I can see the sadness on your face, but please, shed no tears for me or for my friends and the hours we spent leaving messages on answering machines across town. This might be a hard concept to digest, but not having year-round, full-time access to something delicious wasn't a cause of disappointment for any of us.

When Easter came around, those candies we waited for all year tasted even better. They had the special ingredient that's so easy to forget when we get everything we want with one click: anticipation.

So in answer to your question, peanut butter eggs are my vote. Though I'm not talking about the

peanut butter eggs I can buy today. My heart lies with the ones that funny bunny dropped in my basket back in ye olde year of 1988. I remember my heart pounding in my Easter dress while I fumbled to open the wrapper. And what it was like to eat the last one, knowing I wouldn't get such a large load of peanut butter in chocolate coating until spring of the next year.

Times change. I get it. This isn't me wishing for me the past as much as I'm noting that everything — even something that appears to be a yearly staple — is in the process of becoming something new. As debates rage in our houses and beyond, that's a good thing to remember. Because when we're ready to go deeper than the candy aisle and venture out past the distraction of that funny bunny, it gets us to what Easter is actually about. All of us, every day, can change as well. It's the promise, the hope, the rebirth we can

choose to be in the center of, if we dare.

Love,
Boots

**Dear Boots,
I just got my dream job offer ... in Ohio. What's a Texas-loving gal to do?**

- Already Homesick

Dear Already Homesick,
I clearly remember a point in time in my 20s when I was so overwhelmed, and at times, exasperated with the choices in front of me that I would have traded every possession I had — the clothes in my closet, the five dishes and two unmatched cups in my pantry and my laptop were the lot of it — for just one eency, weency, briefly, weefy peek at the future. A look in a crystal ball or a quick vision while I was stepping onto a subway car. The method didn't matter. And this revelation didn't have to be heavy on details, giving me the final story of spouse, children or career. A simple yes or no was all I wanted in answer to the question on the tip of my tongue from when I woke in the morning until I collapsed in bed at night: *Is it all going to work out okay?*

At the time it didn't seem too much to ask. Though if I'd slowed long enough to drill down on the question, I likely would have discovered it was a cover for the real inquiry that burned even deeper: *Will I find the purpose that makes sense of it all?*

I don't know where you fall, Homesick, on this scale that ranges from *Is it all going to work out?* to *Will I ever find my purpose that makes sense of all this looking for dream jobs and searching for places that feel like home?* But most people on the brink of big decisions like yours can find themselves in there somewhere.

And so I'm going to pass on to you the best advice I ever received on the subject. One afternoon, over coffee poured into the aforementioned two cups in my

kitchen, I finally told a trusted friend how lost I felt. Carefully — because she’s the kind of woman who holds every unmatched and imperfect cup as though it’s a precious, wondrous piece of porcelain — she set down her cup, then she took my hand and looked me straight in the eye and said, “If you get to a point where you know for certain how all your decisions will play out, don’t call me. I want no part of that life.”

So, Homesick, I wouldn’t be able to look myself in the mirror tomorrow if I steered you toward or away from this dream job. That’s the decision that depends on much more than what you shared in your brief note. You’ve likely thought through pros and cons of each choice, so my question to you is — now that you are square on all you know — which parts of what you don’t know interest you more? What feels precious and wondrous, like pieces of porcelain you are lucky to hold for an hour of the afternoon? What will pull you to the edge of your seat, wake you with a question on the tip of your tongue, and remind you, yet again, that oh yes, oh thank you, this possibility of falling flat on my face is a gift.

There’s the very real possibility that whatever you decide, you may tank. Maybe Ohio is a dark, barren, kolache-less land where people look at your boots as though they are alien slippers. Or maybe you remain in Texas and all you love slowly grows stale, becoming a dark, barren, adventureless land where your boots begin to feel like lead bricks.

But maybe, because you lead with your heart in whatever direction makes your toes tingle, even the unknowns you step into will end up beautiful. If that’s the way you go, please keep me posted. I want every part of that kind of life.

Love,
Boots

**Got questions for
boots? Send them to
*boots@wacoan.com***