

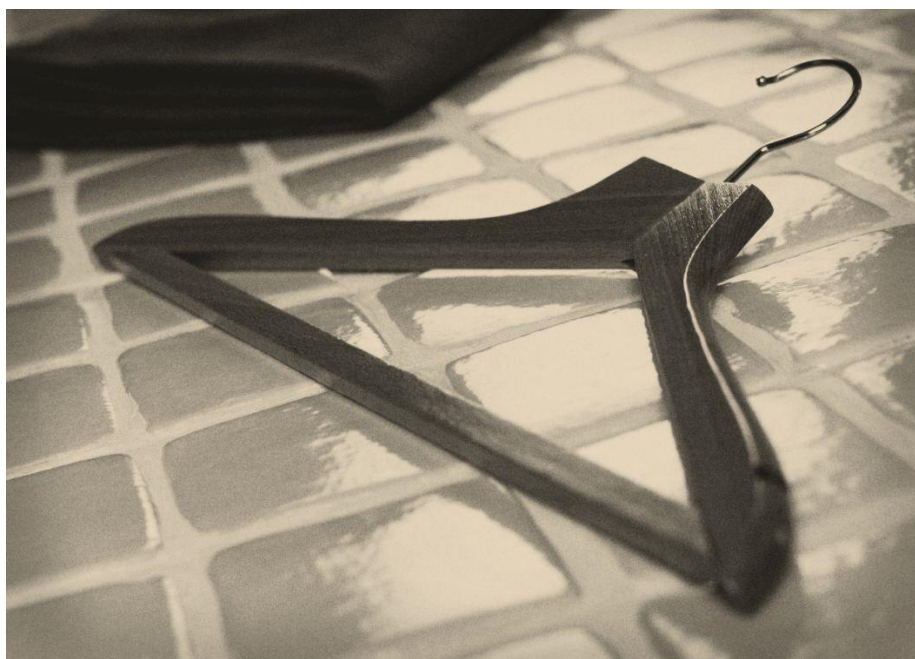


Monday, April 28, 2014

1 gold coin

## Emperor Arrested for Indecent Exposure

By Jack Sprat



The kingdom is still reeling over the shock of Emperor Threadmore's arrest last Saturday evening. Beginning early Friday morning, law enforcement officials were bombarded with concerns from local citizens, many of whom claimed to have spotted the now incarcerated Emperor walking about the grounds of his castle wearing no clothing. When questioned by police, Emperor Threadmore claimed to be wearing garments of the finest quality and accused the officers of being idiots, and therefore, unable to see them. After hours of interrogation, the Emperor broke down and revealed that he could not see the clothing either. He claims that two fast-talking tailors swept into town and convinced him of their ability to make clothing so exquisite, only intellectuals can see them.

"I didn't want to be taken for a fool," the Emperor said in a statement released through his press agent, "so I told the tailors that I had never seen clothing so lovely. My staff convinced me that they too were taken aback by the beauty of the garments. Frankly, I wasn't even sure that I was wearing the blasted things. If anyone is to blame here, it is society for demanding that their political leaders dress the part." Police quickly pointed out that the Emperor should have realized that not being able to feel the clothing might have been a tip off that he was being swindled. Upon further argument, however, many of the officers began to claim that they too could see the outfit. The two tailors seem to have fled the kingdom. No charges are being pressed until the existence of the garments can be confirmed or denied.

## Muffet Caught In Scandal

By Mary Contrary

Popular eatery Little Miss Muffet's Curds & Whey is wrapped up in a scandal after discrimination charges were brought against the establishment last week. According to court documents, Mr. Patrick Webb alleged that he and his family were not seated by the restaurant's hostess and owner, Matilda Muffet, because they are spiders. "She told us to get out of her establishment and that she doesn't serve our kind," Webb said in an interview. He says that the whole ordeal was "humiliating." Muffet could not be reached for comment but released a statement saying: My restaurant is a wholesome establishment and I work very hard to protect that image. If that means not serving certain types of creatures, then so be it." A member of Muffet's staff, who wishes to remain anonymous, told *The Once Upon a Times* that Muffet's hatred of spiders began when she was a child and her lunch was stolen by a member of the arachnid community. Police are currently investigating the allegations.

## Local Shepherd in Custody

By Jill Hill

Local shepherd Peter Lamb was arrested Sunday afternoon, after allegedly reporting false crimes to local authorities on several occasions. "Peter has always had trouble with the truth," said local shepherdess Mary Little, who has known Lamb since childhood, "At first, it was small things like claiming that a wolf had eaten his sheep, but pretty soon the stories were getting bigger and more dangerous." Little recalled a night last autumn when Lamb had the whole town in an uproar after hiding her sister, Bo Peep's, flock of sheep and claiming that they had been eaten by a pack of hyenas. "Bo has always been a bit forgetful," Little continued, "the poor girl has lost more sheep than I care to count. I mean, how do you lose an entire sheep? Anyway, Peter took advantage of that. He deserves to be in a place where he cannot further hurt my family or damage the honorable profession of sheep herding." Lamb is being held on forty-three charges of reporting a false crime. His attorney declined to comment.

# Property Battle Goes to Court

By Bessy Bell

**T**he first day of court in the Landgrab property dispute case convened on Wednesday, with several witnesses being called and interrogated by both parties. Mr. Grumble Landgrab, a native of the Northern Province, claims that the bridge crossing Willow River is his private property and that local officials have no right to ban him from charging tolls to travelers. “That bridge has been in my family for years,” Mr. Landgrab said in a statement released on Monday, “it is my right to charge whatever I want if people want to use it.” Landgrab claims that he has no issue with travelers using his bridge as long as they offer up some sort of payment. In the past, he claims to have accepted gold coins, three wishes, and first born children. Local authorities dispute Landgrab’s ownership claims and brought into the courtroom legal documents that show the bridge is owned by the government of the Northern Province. When asked to produce the deed, Landgrab claimed that a Billy goat had eaten it. Court will reconvene on Friday.

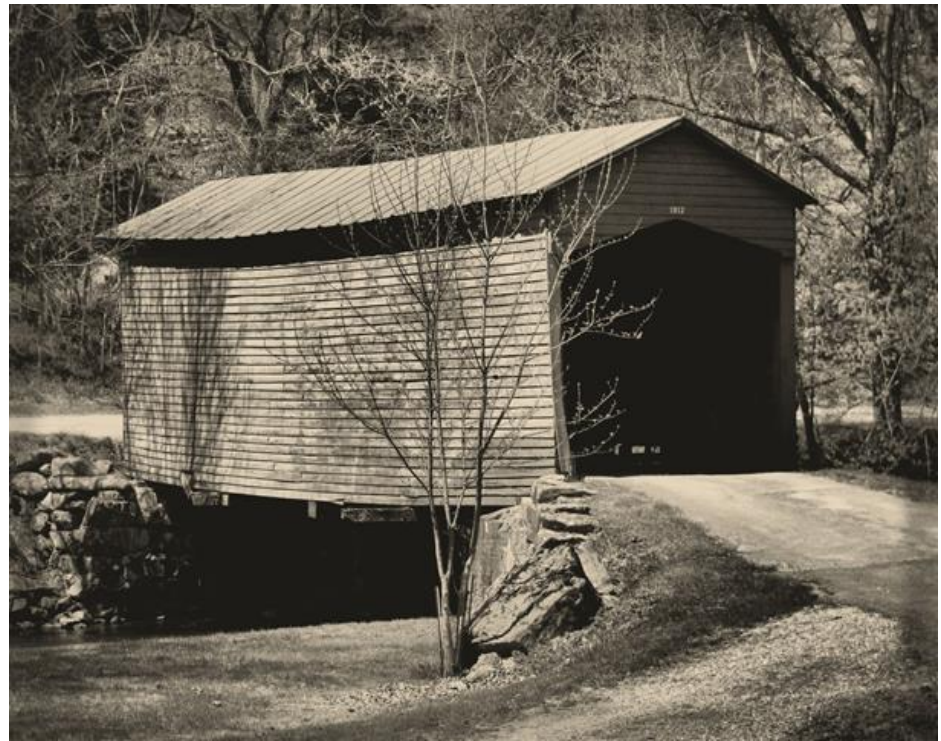
# The Drug Craze Gripping the Kingdom

By Hilda Hubbard

**H**enrietta Jacobs stands on the front porch of her small cottage, looking out onto the remains of her once prosperous farm. At this time last year, her fields were full of ripening vegetables and herds of healthy livestock. Today, the garden stands barren and only a few sickly cows wander across the property. “We’ve always been a small farm. We’ve struggled along with everyone else, but somehow managed to get by and even have a little extra left over. With Jack gone, I just can’t manage on my own and can’t afford to hire someone to help me. This is all that’s left.”

Jacobs is speaking of her son, Jack, who is currently doing time at Briar Rose Memorial Jail for possession of illegal substances. The family’s troubles began around ten months ago, when Jack came across his first handful of Magic Beans. “I knew he was acting oddly, but didn’t know what was causing it,” Jacobs says. “But pretty soon, things were out of hand. He started lying and stealing, then stopped helping out on the farm altogether. I noticed my cattle were disappearing. He was sneaking them off the property and selling them for his fix. With no help and disappearing livestock, my farm was finished.”

Cases like Jack Jacobs’ have become all too common lately. Magic Bean abuse has reached an all-time high, with new strands being introduced to an eagerly awaiting population every few months. The Beans, which are generally eaten



whole or ground into food, cause a variety of side effects, ranging from intense euphoria to strange hallucinations. Consumed in large doses, they can be deadly.

Jacobs recalls a morning shortly before Jack’s incarceration when she found him lying in the front yard, gasping for breath and clutching a neighboring farmer’s goose. “He was out of his mind,” Jacobs says, “he just kept screaming that a giant had chased him down an enormous beanstalk. He told me that our financial troubles were over, because he had stolen the giant’s magical goose. It supposedly laid golden eggs and could talk. He held it up to me and I immediately recognized it as one of our neighbor’s prized ganders. I returned it to him, but needless to say he was not happy. That was the moment I realized something had to be done.”

Jacobs contacted local authorities, who arrested her son the next morning. “I figured jail would be the safest place for him. I hope he forgives me when he comes home...if there’s any home to come back to.”

Jack is currently serving 10 months, which should give him plenty of time to get clean. His mother is optimistic about his return, “If I can just keep the farm going until he gets out, I know that he and I can restore it to its former glory.”

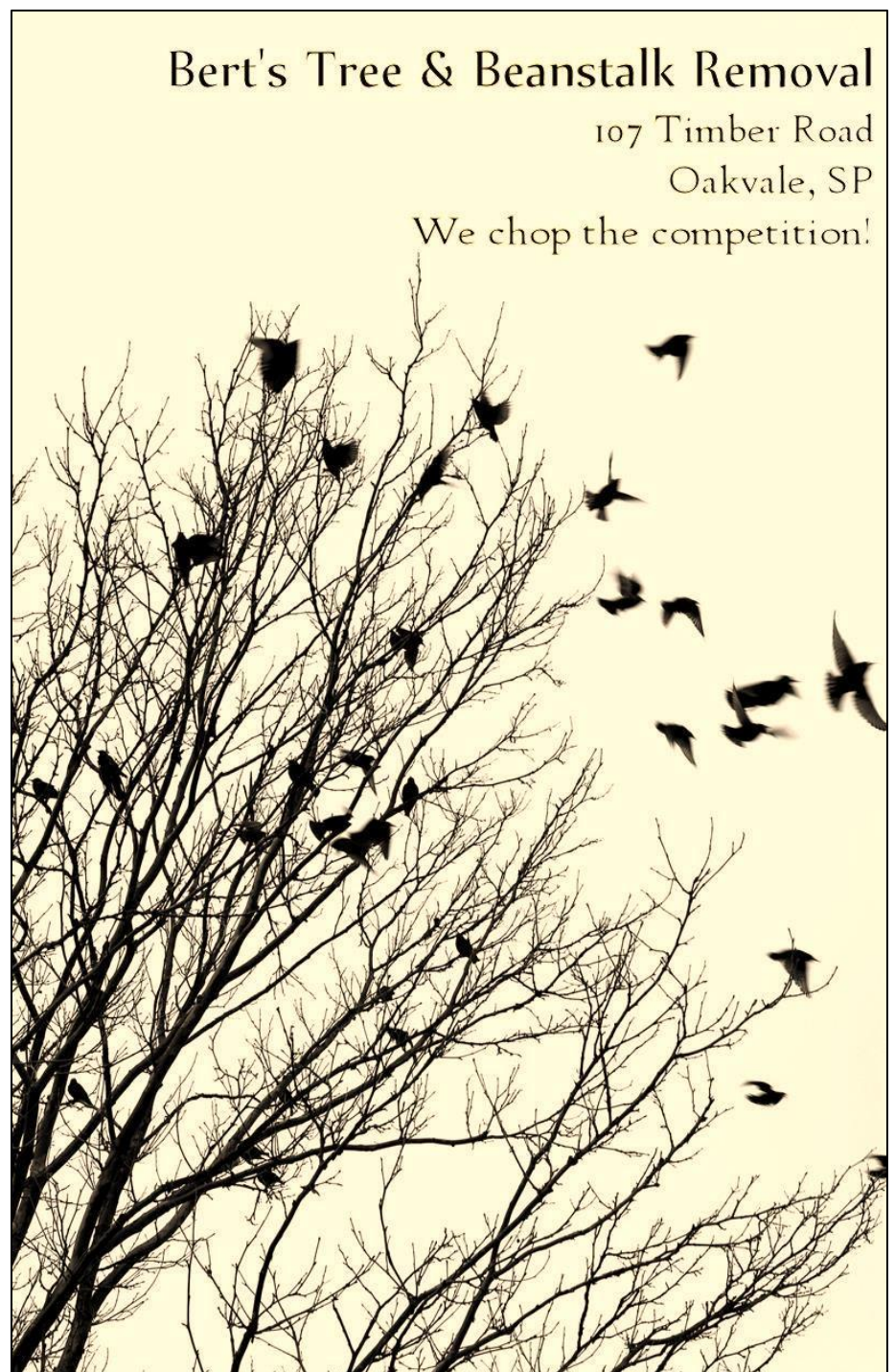
The future may be bright for Jack, but the Magic Bean craze that is gripping the kingdom seems to have no end in sight. Recent legislation has instilled harsher punishments for those caught with the Beans, but it has done little to curb the public’s appetite for their psychedelic properties. When asked if she has a message for people who are interested in trying Magic Beans, Jacobs has only this to say: “Remember your mothers. Think about how your actions might hurt them before you go climbing beanstalks.”

# Questions Arise Over Eggleton Death

By Bernard Blue

**H**erbert Dumpty, 36, was found dead yesterday morning. Police say that Dumpty's body was discovered at the foot of the wall surrounding the town on Eggleton by a local farmer on his way to the market. Investigators believe that Dumpty climbed to the top of the wall and fell to his death around midnight on Monday. At this time, police are not ruling out suicide but are hesitant to declare it anything more than an accident. "We currently don't have enough evidence to support allegations that this was a suicide," Officer Copper of the Eggleton police department says, "but we are questioning Dumpty's friends and family at this time. Right now, the big question is what he was doing climbing that wall in the first place."

Dumpty had lived in Eggleton all of his life. Until recently, he had been employed at a nearby dairy farm. He was fired after his romantic relationship with the farmer's daughter became public. His sister, Helga, does not believe that her brother would take his own life. "Humpty was a good person and had a good head on his shoulders," Helga says, "I will admit that he has been depressed since he lost his job at the dairy, but he would never do something so extreme. Sometimes, when things got rough, he would just climb to the top of the wall and sit. He liked to view and said that it cleared his mind to be away from everyone for a while. I tried to tell him that it was dangerous, but he didn't listen." Police hope to complete their investigation before the end of the week. Services for Dumpty will be held on Friday.





# ifestyle

## Esmerelda Godmother's Gossip Corner

**H**ello, dears! It's been a busy week at the rumor mill and I have all the details. What fallen princess was seen stumbling out of McPumpkin's Pub last Saturday? I'll give you a hint: she left her shoe on the dance floor. That's right! None other than our very own enchantress of the embers, Cinderella. As you all know, troubles began for Cinderella shortly after her marriage to former teenage heartthrob, Prince Charming. In the past three years alone, Cindy has been arrested four times; once for assault after hurtling a pumpkin at her stepsister and three times for public intoxication. Things looked like they were turning around for Cindy after the royal's successful appearance at the Twenty-Fifth Annual Charming Ball at her castle this past summer. A reliable source, (who wishes to remain nameless though I will tell you that the source and our darling diva shared a home together for several years before her marriage. Oh no! I dare not say more!) tells me that her appearance at the ball was a cleverly concocted ruse by the castle's publicity team to generate some good press for Cindy. "Oh yes, she is an absolute mess!" the source told me exclusively, "She parties all night, sleeps all day, and is a complete tyrant around the castle. I don't know how that darling Charming stands it! She doesn't even speak to us- I mean, her stepsisters anymore. She's still a bit jealous of them, if you ask me." Looks like it's going to take more than magic to clean up this prissy princesses' act!

Speaking of princesses, another one of our kingdom's finest figures is courting scandal herself. Snow White, best known for her glamorous good looks and stance as an animal right activist, has apparently moved out of the castle she shared with her regal stepmother and current queen of the Western Province. Now, I'm not one to judge but even I clutched my pearls when I heard who Snow has moved in with. Get ready to gasp! Not one...but seven strange men! Can you imagine? When I first heard, I screamed and locked myself in the bathroom! Things might have been bad at home, but my goodness! Whatever the princess's reasoning is, she's keeping it quiet. When I approached the cottage for an interview, Snow seemed terribly paranoid and surprised that I managed to find the place. She swore me to secrecy, but I couldn't deny you this delicious piece of gossip, dear readers!

But this week's gossip doesn't end there! Oh no! I told you I had good stuff, didn't I? Yet another princess finds her way into our pages this week. Something must be in the water...or whatever it is that princess' drink. Anyway, this bit of news is just beastly! Rumors have been circulating for

weeks that a famous figure has called it quits with her animal companion turned boyfriend. Looks like those rumors might be true! Judging by the fact that Belle was spotted out shopping on Monday in the town square wearing...wait for it... an ankle length fur coat, I'd be willing to bet that things didn't end on a good note. Was this just a fashion misstep or is Belle sending out the message loud and clear that she and the beast are over? Considering it was 90 degrees on Monday, I'm willing to bet on the latter. Time will tell.

Well, that's all I have for you this week, darlings! But don't worry your pretty little heads; I'm cooking up something positively juicy for next week. I can't give away any of the glorious details just yet, but trust me, it will make this week's news look like something you heard from your grandmother! As always, take care, and be on the lookout for scandals of your own! You never know when one might pop up! See you next week, dears!



# Dear Gepetto

Dear Geppetto,

I recently moved away from home and am living with roommates for the first time. There are seven of them and we have a pretty small place. They are impossibly messy and leave clothing all over the house, never do the dishes, and refuse to make their own beds. I don't have a job right now, so I don't mind cleaning up a bit while they are out, but it has just become too much to handle. That, along with stress over some issues with my stepmother that I'm dealing with, has me on edge. I don't want to have to move out, but I feel like I'm being taken advantage of. What should I do?

Sincerely,  
Accidental Maid

Dear Accidental Maid,

It sounds to me like you need to take the time to confess your feelings to your roommates. It might make things awkward for a while, but it will be worth it in the end. Just be sure to do it in a kind, honest way that doesn't make it seem like you are attacking them. Tell them that you don't mind pitching in, but you would appreciate it if they didn't make your job harder than it has to be. If they don't understand that, then maybe it's time to move on. If they do, then your life will have gotten much easier. Best of luck!

Dear Geppetto,

I am 11 years old and live in a small cottage with my mother. About once a week she sends me to my grandmother's house with a basket of food. Thing is, my grandmother lives 36 miles away in a bad neighborhood. To get there, I have to travel through a forest filled with wild animals, across a swamp known to be home to more than one witch, and a field full of coma-inducing poppies. Now, I may only be a child, but even I am beginning to suspect that my mother is trying to get rid of me. Should I approach her about it or seek help from an outside source? I would ask my grandmother, but I am beginning to suspect that she's in on it.

Yours,  
Afraid of the Woods

Dear Afraid of the Woods,

If I were you, I would be very careful discussing this matter with your mother. If she is trying to off you, then addressing it may hasten the process. If she isn't, then things will get real uncomfortable real quick. I would suggest talking to a trusted friend or child welfare service. Be careful who you confide in though. Telling the wrong person might make things worse. In the meantime, carry pepper spray on your journeys and only travel during daylight. I hope it all work out!

Dear Geppetto,

My family and I live at the bottom of the ocean and are in positions of great power here. We all love our kingdom and the beauty of the sea. My youngest daughter is different. She has become obsessed with the lives of people on land and talks nonstop about them. Recently, I discovered that her closet was full of trinkets she has collected from them. Now, I have nothing against land-dwellers, but her obsession seems to be bordering on unhealthy. What should I do?

Cordially,  
Concerned Father

Dear Concerned Father,

First of all, I have to question how you came across your daughter's collection. If you are sneaking around and snooping on her, then you need to stop and reevaluate. Trust is at the heart of any good relationship. As far as her interest in the affairs of us land-dwellers, I wouldn't be too concerned. Teenagers tend to obsess over one thing or another and this just happens to be what she picked. In fact, she should be commended for embracing other cultures. As for you, it sounds to me like you're the one with the problem. Your obvious feeling of superiority over land-dwellers is an issue. Fortunately, it doesn't seem to have impacted your sane, very normal daughter.

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## Real Estate

**FOR RENT** -- 3 BR, 2 BA shoe in excellent neighborhood. Cozy, but with plenty of room for large family. Good condition, only one previous owner. Close to school and market. Located at 103 Old Lady Lane, EP. 350 gold/month.

**FOR RENT** -- 2 BR, 1 BA cottage located in Enchanted Forest. A bit off the beaten path but worth the commute. Recently renovated and perfect for small family. Vegetable garden and well on property. Contact Swamp Witch Reality for more information. 275 gold/month.

**FOR RENT** -- Single room in the home of kindly older couple. Lovely view, plenty of closet space, and private bath. Meals included. No children or pets. 50 gold/month. Write to 315 Cobblestone Drive, WP to schedule a tour.

**FOR SALE** -- Exceedingly tall tower located on flat lot. Beautiful stone craftsmanship with distinguished straw roof. Only one former inhabitant. Ideal for someone who doesn't like visitors...or stairs. Contact Blackbird Real Estate to schedule a tour. Bring a ladder.

**FOR SALE** -- 26 BR, 14 BA castle located on private drive. Spacious ballroom, two full kitchens, and moat. Lovely garden with fountains and hedge maze. Stables in rear.. Sold by Swamp Witch Reality.

**FOR SALE** -- Lovely farm spanning 100 acres.. Ideal for raising livestock. Cozy cottage on property. 3BR 2 BA, large kitchen, full attic, and stone fireplaces. Sold by Blackbird Real Estate.

## Employment

**HELP WANTED** -- Experienced pastry chef needed at Muffin Man Bakery in Drury. Must be willing to work evenings and weekends. At least 2 years experience preferred. Apply in person.

**MANAGEMENT POSITION** -- Shift manager needed at Little Boy Blue Instrument Shop. Flexible hours and competitive pay. Opportunity for advancement. Must be goal oriented, friendly, and passionate about music. Experience with one or more instruments preferred.

**HOUSEKEEPER NEEDED** -- Sweet widow and two charming daughters looking for an experienced housekeeper for our modest home. We have had trouble keeping someone since our previous long term help left us to get married. Duties will include those of housekeeper, maid, chauffer, stable hand, seamstress, and cook. Irregular hours, no benefits,

**WANT JOB SECURITY?** -- Excellent pay? Full benefits? Sleepy Mountain Diamond Mine offers all this and more! Currently seeking applicants for a number of positions. Contact Doc for more information.

## Pets

**FREE TO GOOD HOME** -- Guernsey cow with sweet disposition. Nine years old and in excellent health. Has become too much to handle due to nightly attempts to jump over moon, but otherwise a fine cow with big dreams. Write to Bo Vine for more information.

## Personals

**RESCUE ME** -- Damsel in distress seeks brave prince to rescue her. Currently being held hostage by ferocious bandits in the Northern Province of the kingdom. Must be willing to fight, and potentially die, in the name of love.

**PRINCESS CHARMING?** -- Handsome prince seeks fair maiden to woo. Enjoys long walks about the kingdom, rainy afternoons, and fine poetry. Hoping for someone intelligent with a good sense of humor.

**READY TO MINGLE** -- Lonely shoe cobbler looking for love. Recently found myself with much more time on my hands and a little extra income. Hoping to find a nice lady to share in my success. Must be kind, gentle, and not afraid of elves.

**LONELY AT THE TOP** -- Since my husband passed, I have found myself with more free time than ever before. After careful reflection, I have decided to seek a companion. I am staggeringly beautiful and have been told that I am the fairest in the kingdom. Must be handsome and not intimidated by a powerful woman.

## Miscellaneous

**LOST SHEEP** -- I've lost my sheep and don't know where to find them. Usually if I leave them alone they come home, but they've been gone for six weeks this time. If found, please contact Bo Peep Little of Little Farms in Wooley.