

## **BERT**

**From *Before Oz* by Lauren Grove**

*Bert Bruno, 20s, challenges Frank to a duel to defend his wife's honor.*

BERT: Frank Baum! You wily ol' bastard! I never thought I'd be staring into your ugly mug again. But I swore if I ever DID see you again, that I would get my revenge! This is my lucky day! But it's about to be unlucky for you, Baum.

You don't even remember me, do you? Course not... I'm Bert Bruno. I was the butcher in Aberdeen. The very same Aberdeen where you was the newspaper editor. The last issue you printed before you left town announced the marriage of me to my wife, Bernice. Your issue said it was the PIG event of the season. Pig. P-I-G. Not big event, but pig event. *(He snorts like a pig for emphasis.)* Everyone said it must be a misprint and to let it slide, but I couldn't. Bernice cried for near on a month thinking you called her a swine. She may be a big-boned girl, and sure she's got some whiskers on her chin, but she ain't no pig!

No one messes with Bert Bruno or his wife! You're gonna get yours, Baum. I challenge you! That's right, a duel. Bring your pistols to Washington Square Park tomorrow at dawn. Unless you're too much of a yellow-bellied coward!