

# The Liquorice Farmer

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By Robert Ki

*A typical telling of a joke called The Licorice Farmer:*

So, this person—we'll call her Emma—is walking along through the woods, and she's walking, and she's walking, and she's thinking about her friend George, who she's on her way to see. She hasn't seen George in years, but they used to be super good friends in high school. She hasn't talked to him since then, but she's heard that he has a farm out in the middle of the woods now. And as she's walking along, she notices that the air... She notices that the air smells super sweet, like cherries or something. And as she's walking, the trees clear, and she's at George's farm. And there's a big red barn to her left, and a little pasture between the trees, and she can hear a river off in the distance, and there's a cozy farmhouse in the middle of it all. And as she's standing there, she hears George call from the barn, "Emma, up here!"

And she looks up, and there's George—he has a beard now—and he's waving from the top

window up in the barn. And she waves back to him, but she notices that his hands are really red—like, even from down where she is on the ground, she can notice it. And so George calls out and says he’ll be right down, and Emma just kind of shrugs the red hands off, since it might’ve been the sunlight hitting him weird or whatever. But then when George gets down to the ground, he pushes the barn doors wide open to come see Emma, and Emma sees that the inside of the barn is stacked to the rafters with bales and bales of liquorice!

And Emma—rightfully so—is a little bit perplexed by this. And she asks, “George, are those a bunch of bales of liquorice you’ve got in there?”

And George laughs a little, and he says, “Yes, yes: I grow liquorice here. I’m a liquorice farmer.”

And Emma blinks, and she says, “Um... what? You *grow* liquorice here?”

And she’s racking her brain, trying to think of how liquorice is made, and she realizes that she doesn’t *really* know that it doesn’t grow out of the ground.

And anyways, George says, “Yup, I just got done picking the red liquorice from the field. I was just about to head out and pick the green liquorice out of the trees.”

And Emma looks around, and she notices that, son of a gun, there’s green liquorice growing on all of the trees around here.

And so Emma looks back into the barn, and she sees a bale of blue liquorice, and she asks, “Well where does the blue liquorice come from?”

And George says, “Oh, the blue liquorice? I fish the blue liquorice out of the river down the hill.”

And Emma sees a bale of yellow liquorice, and she asks, “Well where does the yellow liquorice come from?”

And George says, “Oh, the yellow liquorice: I dig the yellow liquorice out of the mine out back.”

And Emma sees a bale of black liquorice, and she asks, “Well what about the black liquorice: where does the black liquorice come from?”

And George says, “Oh, the black liquorice: I sheer that off of the black sheep twice every year.”

And Emma looks around the barn, and she's looking, and she's looking, and she notices that there isn't a single bale of her favorite flavor of liquorice. And she scratches her head, and she asks, "Well George, where does the orange liquorice come from?"

And George says, "Oh, the bright fuschia liquorice: I—"

"No no," Emma interrupts. "The orange liquorice: where does the orange liquorice come from?"

and George says, "Yes, the bright fuschia, it comes from—"

"No, George," Emma says. "The *orange* liquorice: where does the *orange* liquorice come from?"

And George points to a pink bale of liquorice, and he says, "The bright fuschia—"

"Yes, I see that," Emma says, "but I'm asking about the orange liquorice."

"Bright fuschia?"

"Orange."

"Bright... fuschia?"

“*Or-ange.*”

“Ohh,” George says. “The *orange* liquorice?”

“Yes!” Emma says.

George chuckles, and shakes his head in embarrassment. “Ah, sorry, that could’ve gone on a while. Orange you glad I didn’t say bright fuschia?”