

## Yetis vs. Trolls

My great-great-and-five-more-greats grandmother was born in old Michigan a fair number of years ago. Old Michigan was a pair of landmasses lost from our maps and surrounded by lakes. That's the reason they named our New Michigan after it. Over time, people just stopped referring to it as New Michigan because they forgot about the old one.

Old Michigan's landmasses were shaped like slippers and surrounded by water on most of the sides. They used to be one, but the Grander Rapids, which churned and eddied, slowly squeezed their middle and pushed them apart. In between the two was a one hundred mile wooden, rope bridge that you had to take by foot. The peninsulas shifted 3 inches a day so that at the end of the week a troll and a yeti had to add a board or two to each of their ends of the bridge. This is partly the reason that people from the Old Upper Peninsula never mingled with the people of the Old Lower Peninsula. The journey was long and dangerous, inching along the cracked boards and knotted, twisted ropes. Lots of people were lost in the Grander Rapids, which churned and eddied, below.

Rumors used to grow between the peninsulas of the type of people that lived there. The Old Upper Peninsula dwellers called the Old Lower Peninsula inhabitants "trolls" because they lived below the bridge. The "trolls" used to call their northern neighbors "yetis" because anything north of the bridge was rumored to be arctic wasteland.

But naturally the people of the Old Upper Peninsula weren't yetis at all. They were same as you and me. And their land mass was nothing like the frozen tundra that the trolls thought it was. The trolls were regular people too. My great-great-and-five-more-greats grandmother was from the Old Lower Peninsula and, consequently, a *troll*, too.

The rumors spread year after year about the differences between the people that had once shared a united country. The trolls would carry a dreadful tune. The yetis would bathe in mud and garbage. The trolls would play basketball with kittens. The yetis would lock up their elders and feed them mushy brown sprouts. They kept getting worse as time went on until the two different peninsulas almost hated each other. Ghost stories would arise of an escaped yeti that was roaming amongst the trolls. Or a troll that went on a rampage thru yeti villages.

But the stories of wonder grew with the years as well. It was rumored that the Old Upper Peninsula yetis had raised a special type of bumblebee that produced a special type of royal jelly that turned into a special type of honey that they used in special types of sandwiches. It tasted like chocolate and sugarplums and wild raspberries. Its flavor was hinted with candy corns and peanut brittle. One person would say they tasted vanilla and another would say they tasted mint and still another thought it tasted like bananas. All the yetis ate dozens of special jelly sandwiches every day and all the yeti children loved it.

The trolls were amazing farmers and their orchards and fields and pastures and gardens and forests all met and swirled as they plowed and reaped and picked. One day, in the middle of their swirling lands, a special type of tree popped up. Within a few months a bunch more sprouted, then more and more. The special type of tree had special type of nuts, which has special types of flavor in their centers. The trolls took the meat of the nuts and ground them into a paste and spread it on their breads. It tasted like liquorice and hazelnut and lemon drops. Its flavor was hinted with cream cheese and cotton candy and butter rum. One person would say they tasted root beer and another would say they tasted raisins and still another thought it tasted like popcorn.

The yetis had never tasted the trolls' special spread.

The trolls had never tasted the yetis' special jelly.

But each one was highly coveted among the others. The trolls would hold meetings to discuss ways of raising the yeti bees. The yetis would have seminars to talk about ways of growing the troll trees. Neither was able to do it, though. So they just hated each other more.

So my great-great-and-five-more-greats grandmother decides one day that she had enough of her special spread, even though it's the most amazing thing she tasted in her life. She decides that her wonder and curiosity for the yetis' jelly has consumed her mind and she was leaving at once for the one hundred mile rope bridge, which spanned above the churning and eddying Grander Rapids.

She says goodbye to her family whom she loved so dearly. She hugs her friends, who think they'll never see her again. She packs up two jars of special spread and heads off for the one hundred mile bridge.

The journey is long and dangerous and the Grander Rapids are churning and eddying below. The wood creaks and the knotted ropes groan, as every step could be her last. And on she goes for miles and miles, stopping at points to have a special spread sandwich and rest her weary feet. She's been gone for days now and misses her family and friends terribly. The flavor of her spread now tastes gritty and sour. The wonderful cornucopia of sensations is replaced by the meager need for sustenance and she eats the spread now only to keep her stomach from hurting. Her heart aches for the memories of her loved ones, but she continues to press on. She knows after fifty miles of careful steps and racing heartbeats she'll hit the little flag that demarks the end of the troll land and the beginning of the yeti country.

When my great-great-and-five-more-greats grandmother is weary and exhausted and ready to give in, she sees a figure on the horizon and a waving flag between her and it. Slowly, cautiously, she approaches the figure as it slowly and cautiously approaches her.

Less than a mile away from each other, my great-great-and-five-more-greats grandmother can see that the figure approaching is a person. The person is of normal size and stature and not covered by white fur at all

The two of them come closer and closer until they can make out each other's faces and she notices that it's a boy, probably around her age.

She's steps away from the middle of the bridge.

The boy says 'Hello.'

'You must be a troll too,' she says.

'I'm a yeti,' the boy answers. 'Aren't you one?'

They were staring into each other's faces and they looked like they could've been neighbors, friends, or even family. They started chatting about their homes and realized they had a lot in common. Both were peaceful people that loved music and dancing. They played sports, but not with kittens, and cared for their elders. They bathed like everyone else, with soap and water, and giggled when they washed under their arms.

'Is it true that the troll spread has the most amazing flavor in the world?' the boy asked.

My great-great-and-five-more-greats grandmother, who'd grown sick of the taste of the special spread, told him he could have her second jar. She didn't care if she ever had another mouthful. The boy, bewildered by the notion of finally tasting the trolls' special spread, offered her a jar of the yetis' special jelly.

'I don't like it anymore,' he said. 'It doesn't taste good to me.'

So they both sat down on the swinging wooden, rope bridge, while the Grander Rapids churned and eddied below, and opened each other's jars. Sticking in a finger simultaneously, they smiled to each other and pulled out a dollop of the special contents within. Without a word, they put their fingers in their mouths and tasted.

It tasted the same.

The boy and girl each called town meetings in their respective peninsulas. All the trolls of the Old Lower Peninsula gathered in the Old Lower Peninsula Town Hall and the troll girl told them of the yeti boy and his jelly. All the yetis of the Old Upper Peninsula gathered in the Old Upper Peninsula Town Square and the yeti boy told them of the troll girl and her spread.

The following week, trolls and yetis lined up on their sides of the bridge and everyone grabbed the rope and tugged. Slowly, inch by inch, the peninsulas began to slide. The Grander Rapids, which eddied and churned below, did so in a continually narrowing river bed. Board after board popped out of the bridge as trolls and yetis, together, tugged as hard as they could. Mile after mile, the peninsulas slid closer and closer. Finally, the land masses neared and touched as the Grander Rapids was split in half, eddying and churning on either side of the united land as the Great Lakes. The trolls and yetis, now called Michiganders, erected a statue at the very spot that the peninsulas met and drove it deep into the ground to safely secure the land so it could never be divided again.

The statue was the boy and girl. Each with half of a sandwich they made together. Together, they learned the jelly and spread tasted even better than either one by itself. They also realized that the yetis and trolls alone weren't as good as the Michiganders together.

And to this day, at the very spot where the Michiganders cross their peninsulas to celebrate their unity, the statue still stands.

The End.