

S'more Sasquatch



by Shannon Scheiwiller

*Enjoying s'mores while camping?
Don't forget to toss a marshmallow into the woods...*

"Come here, Royal, and smell this. It's the best smell, ever!" Joe said as he ripped open the new bag of marshmallows. "Take a huge whiff of this." Joe mumbled, "It's incredible."

"Dude, you are so weird!" replied Royal, wondering why he agreed to go camping with his friend Joe.

"Joe!" yelled his mother, Sarah. "Get your face out of that bag, you're getting drool all over the mallows."

"All right, enough, give me that bag before you ruin them." said Jack, Joe's father, as he took the bag. "Joe, go get the chocolate and graham crackers."

Jack pulled his chair closer to the fire, offering the bag to Joe's grandfather, Earl. "Dad, you first."

Earl reached in, selected a marshmallow and flung it deep into the woods.

"Joe, Sarah?" asked Jack as he selected a marshmallow for himself.

Joe and his mother each reached into the bag, selected a marshmallow, and all three threw their marshmallows deep into the woods.

"Royal?" asked Jack as he offered the bag to the confused teenager.

Royal leaned close to Joe and whispered, "What? What am I supposed to do?"

"Well," whispered Joe in an embarrassed voice, "reach in the bag, grab a marshmallow and throw it into the woods."

"You're kidding, right?"

"No, just do it. We've been doing this for years."

"No way. This is another one of those gags you've been pulling on me since I got here. Just like that snake in the pillow trick and that whole thing about using leaves. I'm not falling for this one."

"Royal, just do it. Grandfather's really serious about this." Joe urgently replied.

"No way!" he whispered and turning to Jack said, "No thanks, I'll pass on the marshmallow sir. I'll just have graham crackers with chocolate."

Jack and Sarah exchanged an anxious look of regret.

Grandfather Earl stood up and sighed. "Royal. You need to throw one into the woods or you'll put us all in danger." Grandfather thrust his hand into the bag, quickly grabbed one, and threw it as far as he could into the forest.

Royal sat, frozen with confusion, waiting for everyone to laugh at the joke that was being made at his expense. But no laughter came.

"Royal," said Grandfather in a patient voice, "Let me tell you a story that you may find hard to believe."

Reliving the story in his mind, Grandfather began "It happened 76 years ago, when I was 12. I'd been invited on a wilderness trek to a remote mountain lake in the Cascades with my father, my uncle Ben, and two of their

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friends, Bud and Dan. There were no roads back then, so we rode horses and took along mules to carry everything."

"We had set up a nice camp, with a cooking area and a hand-dug latrine. We made a fire pit and circled logs around for chairs. The fishing was great, the hunting poor, but we were having fun."

"On the 13th night, Ben pulled out a bag of marshmallows he'd been saving. He wanted to make me a special camp treat, something he called "gimee some more". Nowadays, people just call them "s'mores". They weren't well known back then, and we would've never had them if his daughter hadn't been a Girl Scout. Ben dropped three marshmallows before he figured out how to get them to stay on his stick. My dad, Ben and I, each picked up a dirty marshmallow and threw it into the woods. Don't know why we did that, just did, is all. Ben roasted marshmallows and piled the gooey mess onto graham crackers with chunks of chocolate. When the fire died down, Ben stored the leftovers in a tin that he had packed."

"We crawled into our bedrolls and fell asleep. It was the middle of the night, when a loud crashing noise woke us! We all jumped to our feet to see what it was and found giant boulders crashing into the campsite, obliterating everything! All of us started to run around trying to see in the darkness! Dan found his lantern and frantically tried to get it turned on. The noise was deafening!"

"Dan found the switch and his lamp suddenly beamed with light! We could see sofa-sized boulders strewn all over our campsite, and large, hairy apemen surrounding us. Just then, a huge brute came running from the darkness and snatched Dan as if he were a rag doll. His lantern fell, and we could just barely see that the beast was sniffing Dan; it was an eerie, wet snuffling sound. Then, grotesquely, it started licking Dan's shirt, like a lollipop. With immense ease and power, the beast leapt into the woods with Dan, clutching him as if he were a football."

"About then we noticed an awful, dreadful stench. Bud dropped to his knees and began vomiting! As he struggled to control himself, another hairy giant sprung from the blackness, grabbed Bud and sniffed at him hungrily. The beast let out a terrifying bellow and carried Bud away."

"Ben and I stood trembling with fear. Dad, somehow, found his rifle and fired a shot at the creature that'd taken Bud. That gunfire spooked the other beasts, and they vanished into the forest. Our camp was destroyed, the horses were run off, the mules were crazy with fear; and, of course, two of us were gone! Dad threw our boots at us and told us to grab our rifles. We had to get help! We had to get out of there! Every twig snap, every animal's screech sent us scrambling faster! Afraid the giant beasts were after us, we ran with abandon! Eventually complete exhaustion overtook us; we stopped and collapsed."

"We were dazed, hungry and frightened. We took inventory of what we had grabbed in our panicked flight, and discovered that the only food we had was the tin of s'mores fixings that I'd grabbed. Ben started a campfire, and we began to roast the marshmallows. I was too scared, my hands were shaking so badly, to even put my mallow on the stick, and I kept dropping it. Ben threw that one into the woods and handed me a clean one. But I dropped it into the dirt as well. By then, I was too upset, and too tired to eat, so I angrily threw it into the woods. I laid down and cried myself to sleep."

"It was the stench that woke me first. I gagged as the odor became overpowering and the noise of the beasts grew louder. Suddenly, they were upon us, hitting us! One, growling loudly, grabbed my dad, sniffed at him deeply and dragged him into the dark forest. In an instant they had disappeared! It happened so fast; there was nothing Ben or I could do!"

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"Ben grabbed my arm, snatching me off the ground, and we ran madly. I don't know how far we had gone before we came across my dad's horse. Ben coaxed her over and threw me onto her bare back, I was numb and could barely move. We rode that horse frantically out of the woods."

"When we arrived into town, people wouldn't believe Ben or me. Thought we were pulling a joke on them. After a day of my constant crying, and when no one else from the camp showed up, the local sheriff gathered an armed posse and took Ben back to that lake."

"When they got to the destroyed camp, all they found were giant manlike footprints that were way too large to be human. "Some call them Big Foot, others call them Sasquatch," was what the Sheriff said. "They're seldom seen around here and I never heard of an attack like this one." He was puzzled."

"One of the men found the stick Ben used to make s'mores. "What's this?" he asked. Ben explained about the marshmallows and the messy snack that he had cooked."

"The sheriff asked, "What about the second attack? Did you have these s'mores in there, too?" It dawned on Ben that we had them in both camps and only those that threw the marshmallow into the woods had survived each attack. Each person that had s'mores without tossing a marshmallow into the forest, had suffered a violent death."

"You see Royal, back then not many people had ventured far into the mountains, and those marshmallows were the first to ever have been in that part of the woods. It's from our terrifying experience that we've learned that the Sasquatch has a terrible sweet tooth; that the scent of roasting marshmallows attracts them from miles away. Those who absent-mindedly threw marshmallows into the woods had inadvertently shared with the Big Foot, thereby saving their own lives. And those who didn't toss a marshmallow into the woods, well, the Sasquatch simply took them."

"So, Royal, that's why we throw marshmallows into the woods. That's why you must throw one, Royal. So it'll never happen again."