

## Story of Partaharju (Beardridge)

Wild-Carl was still working at his mill, by the rapids of a small river called Millstream, in the middle of an ancient pine forest. The stream bubbled with the rushing water and wind swished through the pine needles. From across the Millstream a vast wilderness began -- a far-reaching backcountry filled with game and serenity. The nearby Carpenter village was famous for its carpenters, who carved the notches for log houses. The finished logs were driven down the Notchlake all the way to the shores of Beardridge. From there, the logs were transported to their final destination at the site of a new building and turned into a log house. The firs around the esker were covered in old man's beard and thus it was no surprise that people had begun to call this place Beardridge. It was a beautiful esker and its beauty was reflected in the clear — though somewhat rusty — waters of Notchlake which was glimmering in the distance.

Wild-Carl was finishing his duties for the day. He switched off the main axle by clicking his self-made switch and the massive mill stones came to a halt. One could still hear the ceaseless splashing of the water wheel turning in the river.

Wild-Carl came outside to the steps of his mill and breathed in the crispness of early autumn. The evening was feeling cooler and the sun was already setting. He shook off the flour dust of his clothes and hit his slouch hat on his thigh so that a large cloud of dust was released.

He propped a log to shut the door and headed toward his cabin. Soon, a small flicker of a candle could be seen from the window, shedding light on Wild-Carl as he set up his supper.

From across the stream something was watching, observing every happening around the mill, and now it was leering into the window of Wild-Carl's cabin. From behind those grandiose age-old firs, the One-eyed-Ivar was peeking into the cabin. As always, he was up to nothing good after all, he was the infamous fishthief and a known scoundrel. It was

the money which Wild-Carl kept in his mill, with neither a lock nor cover, that drew One-eyed-Ivar to the mill this evening. It was well known that Wild-Carl kept his cashbox in a hole behind the great axle, between the wooden boards and the wall.

At that moment, the cabin door was opened. Wild-Carl stood on the stairs and listened attentively. Yes, that's it, he had heard it correctly. It was the wolf howling. The wolf which roamed the nearby forest had begun to become familiar with Wild-Carl and Wil-Carl wished to tame it to be his dog. From the distance, the wolf's short yelps resonated through the clear night. "The moon is soon to rise, and when it does it will be a true wolf opera" thought Wild-Carl, and he went inside his cabin. One-eyed-Ivar could see how Wild-Carl picked up a heavy book and begun to flick through it, carefully following each line with his finger and reading slowly aloud. Soon, he cupped the flame and darkened the cabin with a single puff of air.

One-eyed-Ivar saw his chance, skipped from stone to stone across the stream, and sneaked behind the mill. He gazed into the cabin, making sure he couldn't hear or see anything before slinking on towards the mill door. Soon the log which had been propped in front of the door was tossed aside by Ivar and he slid into the mill. The small creak of the door gave One-eyed-Ivar a small scare, but no sound could be heard from the cabin. One-eyed-Ivar moved his arm towards the axle and the money which he ever so desired. Then something terrible happened! His hand slipped and his fingers were pulled in between the axle which, with great force, kept pulling the hand in. One-eyed-Ivar could only scream; scream like a wild animal. The pain was unbearable and the yanking of his arm was as terrifying as it was unbearable.

Wild-Carl heard the shriek and recognised it as Ivar's voice. He soon came out and guessed what had happened. Wild-Carl walked to the stream without hesitation and grabbed the waterwheel with his muscular arms, turning it against the forces of nature. His shoulders crackled and veins on his forehead bulged but, in the end, the strength of the stream was no match against Wild-Carl and the waterwheel begun to slowly turn against the coursing river. The wailing in the mill stopped and soon One-eyed-Ivar rushed out, clutching his bloodied hand and running away from Wild-Carl.

“That hand won’t be used for treachery no more” thought Wild-Carl aloud and he propped the door shut once again. He returned to his cabin without even checking if the money was in its place.

The wolf, who still was lurking around the forest, had also heard the strange noises and came to see what was happening behind the Millstream. In an instant, its instincts were awakened: blood! There clearly was blood on the ground: it must have dropped from One-eye-Ivar’s hand. The wolf licked the drop of blood on the ground and dashed to hunt its source.

One-eyed-Ivar was running along the esker, glimpsing behind himself to see if Wild-Carl was chasing him. But to his surprise and horror, it was not Wild-Carl who was chasing him: it was a wolf! Panicking, One-eyed-Ivar ran down the hill towards the swamp, which still was filled with water and almost impassable. He thought mistakenly, thanks to his own foolishness, that the beast would not dare to follow him to the swamp.

The wolf watched the man running down the esker and yapped strangely, alerting Wild-Carl. Wild-Carl heard the sound and wondered, could it be the wolf again. It must be. The wolf was now running after One-eyed-Ivar and that bloody hand would make it go crazy!

Wild-Carl grabbed his hunting rifle from the wall, took out some bullets, and bolted toward the direction the wolf’s noise had come from. There he could see One-Eyed-Ivar, shoulder deep in the swamp, and next to him the bloodcrazed wolf snarling ferociously. Wild-Carl uttered something to momentarily distract it and ran quickly down to the swamp. There, in one swift motion, he loaded his gun, aimed, and—just as it sprang toward Ivar—Wild-Carl shot the wolf down. It dropped lifelessly on top of One-eyed-Ivar.

Wild-Carl continued down towards the edge of the swamp, rooting out small trees. Along those trees he walked to Ivar and pulled the wolf off from the top of the wailing scoundrel. Wild-Carl looked at the body of the wolf sadly and thought, what a good guard dog it would have made. But a person is always a person.

He handed a tree to Ivar and told him to grab it firmly. Wild-Carl pulled and pulled, and Ivar held onto the tree knowing his life depended on it. Slowly, the swamp grumbled and gave way for Ivar to get up to the surface. When they got to the edge of the swamp, Ivar was about to leap away but Wild-Carl's strong arm rested on his shoulder and he said "Let's head to the mill."

Ivar thought this was it: his final day had come. When they arrived at the mill, Wild-Carl took out a bucket and used it to scoop out water and wash out the mud from Ivar's clothing. Then he brought clean clothes from the cabin and asked Ivar to wear them. He even tore his own shirt and used the rags to tie Ivar's broken, blood-soaked hand. After all this, he brought a small sack of flour and asked Ivar to bring it to his family.

Then Ivar's lips started to quiver and his eyes well up.

– Why did you do this, to me of all the people? I tried to steal from you!

– Well, it is actually because of the book I was reading.

– What did the book say?

– Do to others as you would have them do to you.