



Leverage from
the EU
2014–2020



LOPPI

Main story: Have you seen a *järri*?

Järris were born back in the day when ice melted, and the ground was gradually revealed underneath. When the air began to warm and the forest was formed, its lushness and softness of the moss, the numerous flowers and plants. Järris are peaceful and happy. They like to swing on the soft petals of the marsh tea, climb in the holes in the bark of the pine trees. They eat one berry here, another one there, and lead such a happy life that only järris are capable of.

Järris look quite sparky, they can see this themselves on the surface of the spring or the pond, but they have big hearts, soft and warm. The järris were born on the highlands by the lakes that are their lifeline. Sometimes, they venture out elsewhere, especially when the little critters of nature, fairies, plants or animals, ask for their help.

Once upon a time, the animals at Kaakko Hill were in great trouble, and järris were needed to save the cattle – well, some claim that people helped, but sometimes it is better not to tell the whole truth. Järris are now on the Poronpolku trail; maybe they will bump into Aino, Helmi and Elias today?

Poronpolku route: The järri highway

The Poronpolku route – ‘reindeer path’ – is a real järri highway. Järris use it to visit each other, to carry their food and other supplies and on their adventures in the wide world when they want to admire the beautiful views. They use ants as pack animals and greatly value their help.

Every now and then, the järris also fight on the route. This happens when someone steps on the path who does not appreciate nature. This does not happen very often: Poronpolku is such a spectacular trail – or rather, a set of trails – that it mostly attracts those who can see its beauty. But there are times when a litterer walks along the route, and that makes järris very angry. They call for horizontal rain clouds, make the roots grab the intruders by their shoes, throw cones at them and push them off the duckboards. Their coffee milk goes sour, their bread slices drop, always buttered side down, and ant armies march right into their wellies and long johns.

Ouch – anyone would mend their manners after treatment like that, wouldn't they?

Syrjä House: Dew has fallen...

Aunt Ida used to take care of Aino during her convalescence in the Syrjä house. Aino had been so sickly in the city that she had to withdraw from school. At Syrjä, she had a friend, Helmi, the parson's daughter. They were best friends and always used to run together into the forest to play when Aunt Ida did not see. Such happy summers, flying bees, blue flowers, and the green, dim light of the forest.

Aunt Ida was not really cross with them. They were nice girls, after all, writing poetry – especially Aino – and sitting on the moss in their pretty dresses.



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Even after Aino grew up and got married, she used to return to the Syrjä house with her own children to show her children all the places she and Helmi loved to play.

And Aino Kallas used to write about Finnish nature in such a beautiful manner:

"The dew has fallen on the bare pastures.

The mallard swims silent in the reeds and the lambs rest.

Night crawls over the bare pastures.

Lord, give your creations mercy and peace."

Loppi, House of the parish clerk: Story of the Devil in the form of a giant

In the backwoods of the Topeno Village in Loppi, you will find a place called Kaakko Hill. The story goes that the devil used to live in the caves of the hill, disguised as a giant.

When the first church was being built in Loppi, the devil did everything he could to disrupt the work. The sound of the church bells tolling, calling people to service, annoyed the giant. People had heard him scream: "Saint Pirjo does not give me peace, she tolls the bells that tease me!" The giant used to call the church bells "Saint Pirjo".

When the bells tolled one Sunday morning, the giant flew into a rage, grabbed a huge boulder off of Kaakko Hill and tossed it towards the belfry. But he missed it, and the boulder fell into Loppi lake, causing the cattle in the whole area to become sick, and many animals were lost.

The giant had cursed the stone: "As long as it is in the water, it will mean bad luck." The people of the village hoisted the boulder on to a projecting rock, and their cattle were no longer possessed.

Avux spruce resin: Wisdom from nature

A boy is walking in the forest with his dog. He is looking for a cure for the scurvy ravaging his village. They see a vagabond who is making a mixture. The mixture makes it possible to travel in time – maybe they can find a solution in the past?

The boy and the dog taste the drink. Suddenly they realise they have travelled to a new place where they can see houses and carriages. A man is scraping something off a tree trunk.

"What year is it now?" the boy asks the man.

"It is 1821 and we are in Hämeenlinna", the puzzled man responds.

He explains that he is collecting spruce resin and he is studying to become an apothecary at the Hämeenlinna pharmacy in the market square.

"Can you help us?" the boy asks. "There is scurvy in our village."

The man advises him to collect herbs and resin, to make an extract out of them and make everyone in the village drink it. The boy says his thanks to the man and drinks the potion given to him by the vagabond. He has instantly returned from the past and starts collecting the ingredients pointed out by the man.

The boy checks all the herbs he finds in the *Flora Fennica* textbook and realises that he had actually met Elias Lönnrot in the forest.



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The main story continues...

Järris are not a threat to people. They live in peace as long as humans respect nature and live as a part of its biodiversity. Nature has a lot to offer, to Elias for example. It is also a great place to play, and to look for peace of mind and consolation, like for Aino.

Järris have seen many things. They have met many types of passers-by, witnessed the joys and sorrows that people take with them into the wilderness in search of harmony. Järris also know how to pave the paths, show people the most beautiful landscapes, exude the strongest odours from nature and the earth, the most beautiful songs of the birds and the traces of the animals, and everything living in nature. So that everyone can live in peace and harmony, giving each other space.

You can catch a glimpse of them at the lake district, if you let your mind run free and accept nature in its true form.