

Archie

- an excerpt from *Tales from Dead Ted's*

August 21, 1974

Kenosee Lake, Saskatchewan

Painted Turtles are rare in southern Saskatchewan, but there are a few. They prefer swampy areas, like the water hazard on the 13th hole at Kenosee Lake Golf Course.

Turtles are gentle animals, peaceful, non-confrontational. Occasionally you will see one jaywalking across the highway, but they are mostly law-abiding residents, not the kind of creature you would expect to find in jail. In fact, I have only ever heard of one Painted Turtle being incarcerated – Archie.

Archie was an average turtle, about the size of a big ash tray; hard and green on top, hard and painted on the bottom. Archie wouldn't have attracted much attention, except that he happened to crawl out of the 13th hole water hazard just as Deter Monteith sliced a Titleist into that same mud bog.

Deter had consumed an average of one beer every two holes - he was trending just north of a six-pack when he and Archie came into contact.

"Whatchu' grinnin' at?" - "Hey Bernie, I think this turtle ate my ball."



"Still counts as a stroke."

Deter fished a new ball out of his bag and replaced it with the turtle. He slapped his ball back onto the fairway and the game progressed - all the way to the clubhouse bar.

Deter pulled the turtle out of his golf bag and offered Archie to the waitress in lieu of a tip. She obviously preferred cash....

"Why don't you and your drunken buddy take your reptile and piss off!"

Deter and Bernie joined us back at the campsite where a party was into extra innings. Dougie, Badger, and I had been waterskiing all afternoon and we had developed a major thirst. Spud and Kielbasa had worked all day, but they were catching up fast with double rye and Cokes. Before the sun went down, we were all drunk enough to be bordering on genius level, and really loud about it.

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The first warning came at about 10:00PM when By-Law Bob the park cop, came by.

“Happy hour is over boys – tone it down - you aren’t the only campers in the park.”

We all became very quiet - for about 45 seconds, until By-law Bob’s taillights turned the corner; at which point the party really got started. It was the kind of social gathering memories are made of; hot August night, cold drinks, great music, crazy stories, and no girls to add rationality. Somebody cranked up the stereo until *Credence Clearwater Revival* could be heard at Carlyle Lake, six miles down the highway. Archie got passed around until somebody dropped him near the fire. Deter picked him up, offered the turtle an unwanted piece of hotdog, and stuck the indented creature in his coat pocket.

The second warning happened about 12:30AM, this time it was the RCMP.

“This party is officially over! Pack it up, turn that noise down, and keep it civil – there are kids in this campground”.



We waited almost three minutes this time – the party seemed to have a mind of its own, which is more that I can say for the rest of us. Archie the painted turtle was the most sensible attendee, by a very wide margin.

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Warning #3 was more threat than warning.

Officer Letaine hoisted his full 6'4" frame out of the cop car and announced: *"If I have to come back here you will all be spending the night in Carlyle"*, and he didn't mean *The Starlight Motel*.

It wasn't good sense that made me fall into my tent. It probably had more to do with heat stroke and Labatt's Blue, but when the paddy wagon rolled up at about 2:00AM, it left without me.

At 9:00 the next morning, those of us who had escaped arrest decided we were sober enough to bail out the other three. We drove toward Carlyle, but only got halfway when we spotted Deter, Bernie, Dougie, and Archie the Painted Turtle on the side of the highway.

The four of them had spent most of the night in jail, but in the wee hours there had been a fracas on the Reserve and the cops needed jail space for fresh troublemakers. Officer Letaine woke up three very hung-over farm boys and one reptile and threw them all out on the street.

"How are we supposed to get back to the lake?"

"That's your problem – and take that God-damn turtle with you".

