

SCAVENGE

Written by  
STEVE MILES

Copyright (c) 2020

stevemiles80@yahoo.co.uk

**FADE IN:**

**EXT. DESERTED BEACH - DAY**

Waves lap golden sand. Grassy dunes rise to verdant forest.

A pair of cracked leather hiking boots step into view -

They're worn by LARS, mid 20s, bearded, a well-traveled backpack strapped to his wiry frame.

Lars shields his eyes from the sun, scanning the landscape - not another soul in sight. He smiles - this is the spot.

**EXT. LAR'S CAMPSITE - DAY**

A small hiking tent nestles at the edge of the dunes. Rocks tension the guylines in place of stakes.

Lars sets a last rock into place. He twangs the bright orange guyline, checking the hold.

A glint of light from the dunes draws his eye. He tilts, curious, trying to make it out.

**EXT. DUNES - DAY**

Lars trudges up the slope. At the brow, he finds a foil candy wrapper snagged in a clump of beach-grass.

He retrieves the wrapper, about to stash it in a pocket when something on the dune's leese catches his attention.

Below, an abandoned campsite - camping gear and assorted trash encircles the remains of a fire.

Lars glances around - there's no-one out here. He smiles.

**EXT. ABANDONED CAMPSITE - DAY**

Lars checks over the camp chair - seems fine.

He peeks inside the cooler - empty.

Lars combs the site. He uncovers a small cooking pot. He checks it over, hooks the handle to his belt - a keeper.

A few paces on, he stubs his toe on a beer can.

He picks it up - unopened. He squints at the wind scoured label, shrugs and pockets it.

A loop of elastic peeks from the sand.

Lars crouches for a better look. He tugs at the loop - it's attached to something.

He scoops the sand away to see a length of fabric - the corner section and peg loop of a tent's flysheet.

He gives it a tentative pull - it holds fast.

Feet planted wide, Lars heaves at the fly, leaning his weight into it. The ground slowly yields its secrets.

Sweat beads his brow. A faint pop - like a seam giving out.

The fabric shears off in his hands -

Lars lands in a heap clutching a torn scrap of fabric.

He shakes the sand free. Looks sourly at the cooking pot - the handle snapped in the fall.

Lars covers the remaining fabric with sand and stomps it down best he can.

He heads back up the slope carrying the cooler and chair.

#### **EXT. LAR'S CAMPSITE - DUSK**

Lars kicks back in the chair beside a campfire, feet resting on the cooler. He opens the reclaimed beer - gives it a sniff. A tentative taste follows. He shrugs - good enough.

He gazes at the ocean, lost in the serenity.

#### **LATER**

The fire has burned down to embers. Lars nowhere in sight.

#### **INT. LAR'S TENT - NIGHT**

Lars, tucked into his sleeping bag atop an airbed. The beer can held upright in the cuff of a hiking boot.

A SCRATCHING sound - like a fingernail tracing fabric.

He stirs, groggy, sits up, clicks on a head-torch. The cone of light sweeps the canopy, searching...

The sound stops. Lars listens - nothing but the waves.

He clicks off the light and settles down.

The SCRATCHING resumes - a dull, steady pitch. CLUNK -

On goes the torch. He spotlights his boots. One rests on its side - the beer can dislodged from the cuff. Dregs trickle out over the groundsheet.

The sound comes again -

He scans the floor to see a fingertip-sized lump slowly circling the fallen boot beneath the groundsheet.

Lars leans closer, puzzled.

The lump stops - as if alerted by his movement. It alters course, tracking towards him.

Wary, he stretches an arm out over the floor and collects the fallen boot. The lump alters course, towards where the boot was removed.

Lars raises the boot to strike. The lump halts. He watches, breathless, waiting for it to make a move.

A breeze rocks the tent.

The lump traverses the floor and disappears beyond the tent wall, drawn to the flutter of a loose flysheet.

Lars lowers the boot. He leans out, bracing a palm on the floor as he shines the light into the corner - listening for sign of movement beyond.

Beer trickles towards the indent created by his hand.

The wind subsides. Lars settles back onto the airbed.

Beer pools in the depression left by his hand. He turns out the light - the SCRATCHING resumes.

TUNK -

Lights on - the beer can rolls towards him - the lump trailing after it. It comes to rest against the airbed.

He raises the boot, lining up the shot - a second lump emerges from the far corner. A third closes from the foot of the tent.

All three lumps converge on the empty can - like tiny shark fins cutting through calm waters.

The light darts between them - trying to keep track. Lars looks to the door - to the sleeping bag zipped to his chest.

The lumps close in -

Lars slams the boot heel into the closest lump - again and again, pounding them in turn.

He stops...listens...stares...

A lump rises - he pounds it flat.

Another takes its place, and still another -

He hammers the boot into the groundsheet over and over - like a claustrophobic game of whack-a-mole.

The head-lamp catches on the boot's cuff, catapulting it across the tent.

Lars pauses, breathless. Spotlit in the torch beam. He listens - nothing. He blinks, rubs at his face - as if to check he's awake.

He scans the floor - no sign.

His eyes fall on the empty beer can. A sheepish grin turns to a relieved chuckle. He stretches for the torch -

The tent shudders. He frowns.

A soft HISS of air. He looks down at the airbed -

The tent walls snap taut. Poles buckle and splinter as the shelter folds in on itself.

Lars wriggles from his sleeping bag - the zip snags - he worms for the door, struggling to find the zipper without the torch.

#### **EXT. LAR'S CAMPSITE - DAWN**

The airbed CREAKS and ruptures in a HISS of air. Lars flails madly as the tent is sucked beneath the sand - like a giant larvae fighting to escape a shrinking cocoon.

Lars sinks from view, his face locked in a silent scream beneath a nylon death mask.

The sand settles. Just the gentle lapping of waves remains.

**EXT. LAR'S CAMPSITE - DAY**

The frayed end of an orange guyline twists against a clear blue sky -

BACKPACKER, 30s, goateed, raises his shades to study the discarded length of cord. He reels it in to find a rock weighted to the other end. He shakes his head in wonder.

He unravels the line and pockets it - a keeper.

Backpacker works his way across Lar's abandoned campsite, the cooler tucked under his arm.

He pauses to give the camp chair a quick once over.

Satisfied, he adds it to his collection and continues towards a small hiking tent at the edge of the dunes.

**FADE OUT**