



This week: Van Damme it, Janet!

He's short. He's very, very French. He's baby-faced. And he's p!\$\$ed off. He's Jean Claude Van Damme, and he's modelling kitchen ware at a theatre near you!

I really feel kind of stupid. While trying to decide between *Bloodsport*, *Kickboxer*, *Lionheart* and *Death Warrant*, I wasted half an hour (while a friend engaged in a friendly fighting match with my sister two rows over) before I realized that each had exactly the same plot (and my sister was getting some very strange looks). With this epiphany in mind, I simply rented the one with the most convoluted plot.

Lionheart seemed to fit the bill nicely. In the first scene, a junkie gets torched (Toasty!) by some generic thugs. It turns out that this junkie is brother to one Leo Gutierrez, a.k.a. Van Damme! Can you say "Vengeance Kick", boys and girls? Actually, V.D.'s in the Foreign Legion at the time (double entendres, anyone?) so he never actually gets around to kicking the other's collective butts. They kind of get lost in a shuffle as Leo uses a combination of fisticuffs and guile to escape the

gion, stoke coal on a freighter, beat up the first one, and swim to America. Then, literally on his dime, he stumbles onto a ring of illegal street fights. Wandering into the ring, he somehow manages to gain the nickname 'Lion' and proceeds to rumble through opponents like a rampaging lion.

With Leo now thoroughly entrapped by the shady Cynthia (and lacking any saleable skills), I'd think the fighting (among other things) would be in earnest. Unfortunately, they decide to advance the plot for about twenty minutes. This section is boring and adds nothing whatsoever to the enjoyment of the movie, plus it features an annoyingly cute little girl.

Eventually they do get around to kicking each other, and that's when the fun really starts. Van Damme engages in mortal combat with four or five other fighters in rapid succession. He finishes them, proving he's a street fighter, too. Then he faces the hulking Attila in a mildly rigged match. Attila nearly becomes a fatality, but at the last second unleashes his fatal fury and wins. Now a world champion (and rich besides), he retires from the battle. He settles down with his sister-in-law and ties up all the loose ends at the last second, except for the drug dealers. Guess there must be a sequel that works, huh?

Acting or Lack Thereof: Van Damme can't act. This doesn't matter much— all he has to do is beat people up convincingly. The real bad actors are the ones who don't fight. Van Damme's self-appointed manager, Josh (or whatever), is a stereotypical movie black who spouts clichés faster than a movie critic in a Cuisinart. The Sultry But Shady Mistress Cynthia is just a typical slut. No real attraction there. But the big knockout here is the Precocious But Charming Child. I've no idea who she is, but she's terrifying. She's almost as bad as those vicious Olsen twins from *Full House*!

Technical Stuff: Not much of note, but I would like to mention the fight scenes. Some of them are well staged, but they all suffer from an almost Max Headroom-ish tendency to repeat the same punches over and over again from different angles. This flaw seems peculiar to Van Damme flicks, and is even used in his current blockbuster *Time Cop*. It's kind of annoying when a fighting movie triggers an epilepsy attack.

Best Line: Nothing comes to mind.

Stuff To Watch For: The fights, of course! Are they fun? You bet! In particular, you'll want to stick

around for the Scottish guy who fights wearing his kilt. Not a good choice of attire for a pit fighter, considering *real* Scots wear nothing underneath. Also good fun is that last fight with Attila. His schtick: he lets his opponent beat on him a while, then knocks them down and pets his pussycat. Attila also bears a frightening resemblance to the late Andre the Giant and sports Wolverine-like sideburns. Har Har! And for the ladies, there's the obligatory nude scene displaying Jean's butt. Females, commence drooling!

Stuff to Fast Forward Past: The plot scenes, especially if the cute kid is in them. We're here to see blood fly, not her nice new bicycle!

Bottom Line: A little too typical, with relatively unoriginal fight scenes. There's some fun to be had watching some of the silly fighters, but you'd be better off spending your money watching *Time Cop*. Also known as *Wrong Bet* and *A.W.O.L.*, which probably stands for *Abysmal With Out Levity*. For real fun, try to spot the video games titles I used in this review!

Next Week: The mind reels as the gore flies! See lawyers eaten, salesmen run over by grinning trucks, and more! See me try to justify *Jurassic Park* as a B-movie! It's the annual Turkey Dinner Halloween Horror Party!

--Trent Drake

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At The



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THURSDAY Oct 20	Krazy Hour 6-9pm
FRIDAY Oct 21	6pm Labatt Pool Tournament Win a bar tab!
FRIDAY MOVIES Oct 21	1) In The Name Of The Father 2) Above The Rim
SATURDAY Oct 22	CFS Student Saver Card Night
MONDAY Oct 24	9pm Saturday Night Live Reruns
TUESDAY Oct 25	Trivia with Jen Daley Check out the specials!

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