

Labour Day for Harry Cleese

A Screenplay by

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SCENE 1

A MUGSHOT WALL in CHARYBDIS PENITENTIARY. HARRY CLEESE, a tall, muscular 28-year old with a dark beard, is holding up his card and dressed in a simplistic blue-and-grey jumpsuit. In front of him sits MR. KRAYON, a tall, smartly-dressed warden very similar in appearance to Idris Elba. They're shortly joined by MR. EAKERS, a short, but chirpy brown-haired man, somewhat like an ant.

MR. EAKERS: (Scouse accent):

Hello, Krayon. Who's this?

MR. KRAYON:

This is the new bloke, Eakers. One Harry Reginald Cleese, of Cleese Enterprises. He's to spend twelve years here on charges of delinquent violence and murder.

MR. EAKERS:

Ooh, nasty. Who's he supposed to have murdered?

MR. KRAYON:

His five-year old sons. They found him with a gun in his hands and the bullets in their bodies.

MR. EAKERS:

Ugh, celebrity crimes. Where we putting him?

MR. KRAYON:

Orders of the Governor, Eakers. He goes to 216, with the Princess.

ANGLE ON:

HARRY:

HARRY'S voice is surprisingly soft.

Sorry, what? Who's this Princess? Who are you putting me with?

ANGLE ON: KRAYON AND EAKERS, sharing a mock-sympathetic look and sighing. KRAYON stands up first.

KRAYON:

It's better if we show you, son.

INT: The PRISON CORRIDORS. KRAYON AND EAKERS are escorting HARRY, while other prisoners bypass them.

KRAYON:

Most modern prisons are divided into two types: gents' and ladies'. Not Charybdis. Our governor Mr. Minosz believes all genders are equal, which means all crimes are equal, and therefore all prisoners should be put in the same jails as equals. And the prisoners you'll be staying with are the worst of the lot.

He points out several doors with prominent names and large glass windows exposing the occupants.

KRAYON:

Pat Rockless and Eck Hillies. Cousins, operatives in the same Irish gang. We caught them joyriding round the streets of Galway with a rival gang lord's son strapped to the hood of their Jaguar. They'd killed him first, of course.

PAT AND ECK, two blond Irish men, stare through the window at HARRY as he passes.

KRAYON:

Cleo Temnestra, leader of the Mycenae Cartel. Spanish mother, English father. She cut up her husband in the bath for cheating on her.

CLEO, a tall, dark-haired woman, is seated on a couch in the corner, but her eyes follow Harry across the room, with a predatory gaze.

KRAYON:

And you, my son, you're going in with one of the hardest customers in the yard.

They stop in front of a door behind which sickly green light fills the room.

Princess Meddiyah of Colchi. Acclaimed cultist back in her country, did some dodgy rituals. But we couldn't touch her there. Then she emigrated to Africa with a rich boy like yourself, nephew of a prominent business mogul.

MR. EAKERS:

And she butchered her boyfriend's uncle.

HARRY stares at him.

Literally. Hung him from a hook by his ankles and opened his stomach from here to here (indicates with his fingers).

HARRY winces.

And then she set her kids with the boyfriend on fire. Fried black like burnt popcorn, they were.

HARRY looks sick.

KRAYON:

I nearly forgot, son, but I hope you weren't planning on going rebound while you're in there,
'cos that's where these little fellas come in.

He snaps two ORANGE-AND-BLACK CUFFS onto HARRY'S wrists. They automatically tighten.

HARRY:

Ow! What did you just put on me?

KRAYON:

These? They're nanomachine containers, son. The governor's wife made these. We can detect your every impulse with them. If you try to stick it in this lady, the nanos spread all over you, and they bite you like centipedes, hard. So you have been warned.

He unlocks the cell door and coaxes HARRY inside.

We'll be dropping in again at dinner-time, Harry. Be a good boy while we're out, won't you?

KRAYON closes and locks the door, and he and EAKERS walk away.

INT: MEDDIYAH'S CELL, dark and illuminated with sickly green lights. HARRY walks tentatively around, when he comes across a short Irish boy, possibly 18, who wears a simple white shirt and apron. This boy is IAN LAYERS.

IAN:

Hey, stranger? What can I do you for? Do you want anything medicinal, or shall we just fix you up with some eco-friendly shower kit?

HARRY:

No, I'm not buying anything, mate. I've just moved in here. I'm Harry Cleese, your new cellmate.

IAN (eyes widening):

The Harry...? (shakes his hand) Glad to have your company, sir! My name's Ian Layers, I'm Ms. Meddiyah's assistant. Please make yourself at home while I run and fetch her for you. (he runs off) Hey, Ms. Meddiyah! We've got a celebrity flatmate!

HARRY smiles and shakes his head, then hears music starting up over the loudspeaker system: “*Everywhere*” by Fleetwood Mac. As the music builds, he sniffs, hearing squeaking, and steps around a corner into a wide, open room. What he sees makes his mouth go wide.

ANGLE ON: A TALL MARBLE SCULPTURE of A WOMAN WITH THREE CROWNED HEADS, HOLDING A WHIP IN ONE HAND AND A TORCH IN THE OTHER. The sculpture is adorned with countless POLECATS and has a lit vivarium full of SNAKES at its feet. The MUSIC comes from a CD PLAYER next to the sculpture. HARRY steps closer to the sculpture, noting the intricate detailing.

MEDDIYAH(V/O):

It’s a nice song, no?

HARRY turns around and starts. Standing directly behind him is PRINCESS MEDDIYAH, a tall South Asian woman who wears a simple jumpsuit with multiple vivid colours. She has long black hair and solid golden eyes that seem to glow in the low green light.

HARRY:

Sorry?

MEDDIYAH:

This song. *Everywhere*. I watched the music video, you know. It’s based on the poem of a highwayman, stealing priceless treasures for the woman he loves. (she laughs) We’re both so similar, you know.

HARRY:

Who are?

MEDDIYAH:

Highwaymen. Children of the crossroads. Children of the between-places. Disciples of Hermes, the father of thieves... (she points to the SCULPTURE) and Hecate, the mother of witches. (grins) Like me.

HARRY:

You’re... a witch?!

MEDDIYAH:

Oh, yes. My whole family are. I have an aunt who lives on an island and turns people into pigs. My other aunt’s in a cult that worships bulls. (under her breath) She even slept with one, once...

HARRY:

Your aunt slept with a bull?!

MEDDIYAH:

Don't talk about it. Not outside this cell. And especially not in front of the governor. She's his wife, you know.

HARRY:

Your aunt is the governor's wife? The same governor's wife who put these (shakes his cuffs) on me?!

MEDDIYAH:

Yes.

HARRY smiles and shakes his head.

You don't believe me?

HARRY:

No, *your Highness*. I don't.

MEDDIYAH:

You will, Mr. Cleese. Before your sentence is through and you are a free man, you will believe.

HARRY watches her step back into the shadows, then turns to IAN.

HARRY:

Ho, Ian. You like a decent young bloke. What are you doing in here?

IAN:

Organised crime, Mr. Cleese. Ever heard of the Galway Army Ant Gang?

HARRY (perplexed):

No.

IAN:

I was in it, sir. So were Mr. Hillies and Mr. Rockless up the way. And my ex-girlfriend, Bella O'Thorn. We used to prowl around the streets of Galway beating up other lads. (shudders)

Then some council bigwig started talking smack about Bella's mam. I don't know what she was

thinking, but she put a machete through his head.

I couldn't let her go to jail, Mr. Cleese. So I took the machete off her, and I sent her away. Then they put me in here, and now I work as Miss Meddiyah's assistant. (small smile) I've got to find work somewhere.

HARRY:

Why'd you do that, Ian? Why'd you throw your life away like that?

MEDDIYAH:(re-entering with a bowl of vegetables)

Love can drive you to do the greatest things, Mr. Cleese...And the most terrible things too. I know this all too well.

KNOCK AT THE DOOR. MR. KRAYON stands outside the cell staring in at them.

MR. KRAYON:

Oi, love-birds! Chat-session's over! Come down to dinner now!

SCENE 2

INT: PRISON CANTEEN. HARRY, IAN and MEDDIYAH are settling down to a mash dinner. PAT and ECK are next to HARRY.

ECK HILLIES:

So, Mr. Cleese... I hear they arrested you 'cos you beat up 24 Scottish businessmen. How's that, now?

HARRY glares at him.

HARRY:

Don't tell me you believe that too?!

ECK (defensively):

Whoa, mate, I was only askin'...

HARRY:

Look, those were not businessmen I beat up, okay?! They were loan sharks! And they were gonna torture my step-dad!

O/S VOICE:

Not so loud, mate! Some of us are trying to have a quiet dinner here!

HARRY looks uncomfortable, then continues, after lowering his voice.

HARRY:

Step-Dad Andy ran a tight business. Sometimes he couldn't get his money by legal means. So he had to borrow loans from a crooked Orkney bloke. One day he couldn't repay the debt, so the loan shark sent his thugs in suits to collect... by taking pieces off Step-Dad Andy's face.

FLASHBACK: the SHEPHERD'S BUSH PUB. ANDY RYAN CLEESE is pinned to a table by a bunch of HARD SCOTTISH MEN (like Begbie of *Trainspotting*), one of whom is drawing a knife from his belt.

YOUNG HARRY barges into the pub, a bunch of his street friends behind him. He locks eyes with the LOAN SHARKS. No words are exchanged. He just grabs the nearest table and throws it at the MAIN THUG'S head, knocking him over.

BACK TO: HARRY, present.

HARRY:

My friends and I gave those thugs something to take home to the Orkneys alright. Twenty-four broken Scottish noses! (montage of HARRY punching thugs, his knuckles growing increasingly bloody) But the loan shark had a shining reputation as a legit business mogul. It was his word against my word! The disgraced stepson of a business rival. (glowers) You can guess who won.

ECK:

Right, so you was innocent all along?

HARRY:

Yes I was.

ECK:

Right, so what about your kids, then?

HARRY falls silent, staring numbly at his food.

PAT (cuffing ECK over his head):

Oh, nice goin', Eck! Stick your foot even further into your mouth, why don't ya?

HARRY:

No, it's alright. Don't blame him for asking. It's just... It wasn't a nice night.

FLASHBACK: HARRY'S HOUSE. He's in the kitchen, getting out a bottle of champagne.

HARRY (V/O):

We'd just made a merger with another company. Me and Megan were gonna celebrate, so I thought I'd crack open the old bubbly.

HARRY holds up the bottle and pops the cork, and the entire screen fills with white mist-spray.

HARRY:

Then everything went white...and it was like a dream.

HARRY'S POV: the kitchen is shifting and warping in colour. He stares at his hands, then he sees two red eyes appearing from behind the kitchen door.

HARRY:

Or...more like a nightmare.

The red eyes belong to a massive scary TWO-LEGGED DOG that runs down the corridor and tackles HARRY, barking and grabbing at his throat. HARRY yells and punches it with the champagne bottle, then slams it against the kitchen drawer. While the DOG is recovering, HARRY grabs a fish knife and shoves it into its throat. He can hear MEGAN screaming in the living room.

HARRY:

I don't know if what I grabbed really was a gun, but the way I was using it, it didn't feel like one.

HARRY runs into the living room to find another TWO-LEGGED DOG strangling MEGAN. He tackles the DOG, then starts alternately punching and stabbing it, while it snaps and barks at him. The whole scene is like a first-person shooter game.

HARRY:

And then...

Something hits HARRY from behind and he falls unconscious right next to the DOG.

HARRY:

When I went down, I was stabbing a monster. When I woke up...

HARRY, stirring to find a gun in his hand. He's bloodstained, and the only bodies surrounding

him are those of his sons. MEGAN is sobbing and staggering backwards, as though he will attack her next.

BACK TO: HARRY, present, in the canteen.

HARRY:

Now my sons are dead, Megan's seeking counselling and most likely a divorce, and I'm in jail, eating mash and beans with a bunch of hardened convicts. (sighs) Just my luck.

ECK:

Hold on, mate. You said these whole shenanigans happened after you opened that bottle, right?

PAT:

Stop bringin' that up, will you, Eck?!

HARRY:

No, he's right. What about it, though?

ECK:

Think, Mr. Cleese. You're stabbin' a bunch of monsters with a kitchen knife, then somethin' hits you and you wake up with your kids dead and a gun in your hand? That doesn't add up. I think someone rigged that bottle with hallucinogens. I think someone's tryin' to frame ya.

HARRY:

And what can I do if they are? I can't leave, I can't contact anyone, so until then I've got to assume I'm guilty and serve my sentence...

V/O:

GIMME MY MONEY BACK, YOU STINKIN' YARDIE!!!

HARRY rises from his chair and spins around.

CU: SICKNESS, a wiry convict with dyed-white hair and a skin discolouration that renders his nose black and orange, is holding down CASSY DUSSEZ, a Jamaican girl with dreads and beaver earrings, with a toothed scoop in his hands.

CASSY:

Get off mi, mon!

ECK:

Not this again, Sickness! (starts rising from his own chair)

PAT:

No, Eck! Stay in your chair! We don't need you gettin' hospitalised from another broken heel!

HARRY (calmly):

I've got this, lads. (leaves the table) Don't touch my beans.

HARRY walks over to the two fighting convicts.

SICKNESS:

You know the rules, Dussez! I place money on your sister to go down in a cage fight, and I expect your sister to stay down in a cage fight!

CASSY:

Polly Dussez don't take dives!

SICKNESS:

She will if she doesn't want Yuri to cut your privileges, you connivin' Rasta whore!

CASSY:

Kiss mi back side, Sickness!

She blows a lump of sweetcorn into his eye.

SICKNESS: (screaming)

You got a flamin' cheek, don'tcha, darlin'?! I reckon I'm gonna 'aveta scrape it off!

He raises the toothed scoop.

CU: SICKNESS' wrist. HARRY'S hand grabs him and jerks.

ANGLE ON: the falling scoop hitting the floor and ringing.

HARRY:

Oi, you. Leave her alone.

SICKNESS lets go of CASSY and shoves HARRY back, hard.

SICKNESS:

Clear off, big lad! I'm 'avin' a private chat with the Yardie.

HARRY:

That so? Doesn't look to me like she was happy with it.

SICKNESS:

I ain't warnin' you again. Naff. OFF, *Fred Flintstone*.

CU: Their two close glaring faces. HARRY raises an eyebrow, then self-consciously checks his beard.

HARRY:

Oh, I'm Fred Flintstone, am I? What's your name, mate?

SICKNESS:

Sickness!

HARRY:

Sickness, eh? Fitting name, really, 'cos what's wrong with your face? You look like...

CU: SICKNESS' face.

a swan.

SICKNESS' eye twitches manically and he reaches for a knife. Just as he grabs it, HARRY instinctively grabs him and throws him across the room, so that he lands back-first on a table, knocking it over.

HARRY:

And swans are vicious beggars, too!

SICKNESS rises back up, screaming wildly and rushing with his knife, not caring that his back's still coated with potato mash. HARRY just calmly grabs a steel tray and slaps his opponent's knife out of his hands, then follows up with an uppercut that knocks him backwards.

HARRY:

Stand down! I'm not in the mood for this!

He turns away.

SICKNESS(getting up):

Eff your mood! And EFF YOUR MOTHER!!!

HARRY'S eyes narrow and he turns back to face SICKNESS.

HARRY:

What did you say?

He advances on SICKNESS, who wildly swings at him, only for HARRY to lunge over and grab his privates. HARRY squeezes hard, SICKNESS screams in pain, and then HARRY grabs his shoulder and flips him over onto another table, breaking it below him.

HARRY:

INSULTING MY MOTHER, ARE YOU?! I'LL PLUCK YOU FOR THAT! I'LL PLUCK YOU FOR THAT,
SWANNY!!

MR. MINOSZ:

HEY!! Break that up!

ENTER MR. MINOSZ, the prison governor. A tall, well-dressed middle-aged Czech man with a full beard and a white suit, strolling intently through the parting crowds.

MR. MINOSZ:

Mr. Cleese, put Mr. Sickness down and return to your table.

HARRY:

Not until he apologises, sir!

MR. MINOSZ:

Apologises for what?

HARRY:

For attacking this woman! (indicates CASSY) And insulting my mother.

MR. MINOSZ:

Did anyone else see this?

Everyone else raises their hands. MINOSZ glares down at SICKNESS, then motions for HARRY to release him.

MINOSZ (hauling SICKNESS to his feet):

I've warned you before, Mr. Sickness, we do not allow the touching of women in this prison!
Least of all touching with violent intent!

SICKNESS:

You'd know all about not touchin' women, wouldn'tcha, Guv?

His words are a defiant wheeze.

MINOSZ:

What was that?

SICKNESS:

'Ow's yer wife? Still bonkin' cattle, is she?

MR. MINOSZ calmly turns to face HARRY.

MR. MINOSZ:

You are not here to pick fights with the other inmates, Mr. Cleese. You are here to serve your sentence!

He punches SICKNESS hard in between his legs, making him nearly fall over.

But insults to women, even I cannot forgive! Guards!

TWO GUARDS in military-grade armour show up on either side of SICKNESS, grabbing his shoulders.

Take Mr. Sickness down to Level 9. Maybe a few hours down there will cure his insolence.

SICKNESS:

NO!!! NOT LEVEL 9!!! NO, DON'T PUT ME WITH THE BULL!!

MINOSZ:

Now, Mr. Cleese... you may return to your dinner. But don't ever let me catch you attacking other inmates again.

HARRY nods dumbly, then walks back to his table, while MINOSZ and the GUARDS walk off, hauling SICKNESS behind them. He's still writhing and screaming, *"NO!! YOU CAN'T PUT ME WITH THE BULL!!! I'M SORRY, GUV, PLEASE DON'T PUT ME WITH THE BULL!!!"*

HARRY sits back at his table. PAT and ECK look at him.

PAT:

Well...that was flippin' audacious! (starts clapping)

ECK:

Too right! You stood up to that eejit Sickness and you got the Governor on your side too! D'you know how long I've been waitin' to do that?

CASSY steps forwards from behind HARRY and slides her arms over his shoulders.

CASSY:

Thenk you for savin' mi, bredren. (kisses his cheek)

HARRY:

No problem, madam. What's your name?

He blushes.

CASSY:

Cassy Dussez. Mi sista's Polly Dussez. People back 'ome call us the Kingston Rum Punchers.

HARRY:

And what did they put you in here for?

CASSY:

Plenty tings, bredren. (counts on her fingers) Unlicensed boxin', stealin' wine, stealin' cattle...

MEDDIYAH:

Stealing their cousin's fiancés.

She stares pointedly at CASSY, who withdraws her hands.

CASSY:

We run a boxin' club over on Level 4, Mr. Cleese. That's what I got in trouble for wi' Sick Boy there. Perhaps you want to come compete in it yourself one time?

HARRY:

Maybe I will, Cassy. But not today. Until then, don't let anyone else treat you like that, okay?

CASSY:

Aright. I look forward to us speakin' again, Harry.

She strokes his cheek and leaves.

HARRY smiles, a little wistfully, and then he notices CLEO TEMNESTRA staring at him intently

from 5 tables across.

HARRY:

What are you looking at? Want me to come and pluck you like I did Swanny Boy?

CLEO doesn't withdraw her staring.

Just clear off, alright? Let me have my beans in peace.

CLEO looks away at this point, and HARRY goes back to having his beans.

SCENE 3

HARRY'S DREAM:

HARRY is stepping through a dimly-lit corridor, holding a torch. He can hear VOICES echoing in his ears. Then before him stands JUDGE KEKIL ROPPS, the middle-aged Afrikaner judge who sentenced him, pointing his gavel like a condemning sword.

JUDGE KEKIL ROPPS:

Harry Reginald Cleese, age 28. How the stepson of a prominent business mogul sinks to living like a common street thug baffles me.

MR. KRAYON and MR. MINOSZ appear on either side of him, pointing accusingly.

As a baby, you strangled a zoo snake in the pram.

MR. KRAYON holds out a dead Gaboon Viper.

At the age of 12, you hospitalised your music teacher in a fit of rage by breaking his ribs with a guitar.

MR. MINOSZ holds up a broken, bloodstained guitar that he brandishes at HARRY, who flinches.

And your acclaimed marriage to business partner Megan Thebes ended with the police finding you holding a gun over the bloodstained bodies of your little boys.

A GUNSHOT rings out, and HARRY starts.

In the absence of any other culprits, we find you guilty of murder, and sentence you to twelve years in Charybdis Penitentiary, the high-security prison island.

HARRY has tears in his eyes now. JUDGE ROPPS brings down his gavel and vanishes with a

resounding thud. MR. KRAYON and MR. MINOSZ lean in on HARRY, glaring.

MR. KRAYON:

Behave like a mad dog, Mr. Cleese, and we're gonna lock you up like one.

MR. MINOSZ:

You are here to serve your sentence, Mr. Cleese. Be decent, like you should have been to your family.

HARRY shudders, then runs past them, rounding a corner to find MEGAN, her hair dishevelled, her clothes bloodstained. She stares at him fearfully as he enters.

HARRY:

Megan? It's me, darling. It's me.

He chokes up, and MEGAN points towards him.

Whoa! Whoa, Megan! I'm not gonna hurt you! Please, I'm not going to hurt you. I don't want to hurt you any more. Just let me speak to you, please...

But MEGAN'S not pointing at him. She's pointing over his shoulder, at something behind him. A low growl resonates from behind him. HARRY slowly turns to see...

ANGLE ON: A MASSIVE LEONINE SHAPE, from HARRY'S POV, CAST IN SHADOW, apart from GLOWING RED EYES and BARED TEETH.

HARRY'S eyes widen in fear, as the SHAPE jumps towards him(again, from his POV), engulfing the screen mouth first, roaring.

CUT TO:

HARRY, waking up in his prison bed, gasping and sweating as he rises from his bed. IAN is standing beside him, grabbing his shoulders.

IAN:

Harry! Harry, it's okay! I've got you, I've got you, Harry! You were having a nightmare! Wake up now! I've got you!

HARRY relaxes in IAN'S arms, panting and gasping.

HARRY:

Thanks, mate. I owe you one.

IAN:

You don't owe me anything, Mr. Cleese. Let's just go to the showers, shall we?

HARRY:

Good idea, I'm stinking like this.

SCENE 4

INT. THE SHOWERS. HARRY, now nude, walks over to stand between PAT and ECK, who are already soaping themselves down and humming *Pride(In the Name of Love)*.

ECK:

Hey, Mr. Cleese. D'you want some soap?(holds out a bar of soap)

HARRY stares at him.

ECK:

I'm not gonna do...that, to ya! I just asked if you want some soap!

HARRY:

Sure, okay.

He reaches out and accepts the soap.

ECK:

Just don't squeeze it. It shoots out your hand like mad.

HARRY nods, then starts rubbing himself down, trying to hum something. Then the soap shoots out of his hand and bounces along the floor.

HARRY:

Oh, blast. Sorry, Eck.

ANGLE ON: The soap, on the floor five feet away.

Ian, can you fetch Eck's soap for us? I'm not lazy, I'm just worried about what will happen if I bend down to get it myself.

ECK stares at him indignantly, but then IAN doesn't respond and HARRY grows worried.

Ian? You okay?

SQUELCH! A massive trench knife plants itself in the soap right in front of HARRY. The knife's owner raises the soap to face level.

ANGLE ON: the knife's owner, CLEO TEMNESTRA herself. Already kitted out in her own jumpsuit, CLEO'S holding IAN by his neck, while his face is coated in dense layers of soap. CLEO has a bloodthirsty smirk as she stares at HARRY.

CLEO:

Well, well, well. Los Tres Cerditos. And I've just blown your houses down.

PAT and ECK both look horrified.

Why don't you run away, little Ants? You look like you need toilets, not showers.

PAT and ECK slowly vacate the premises, while HARRY stays behind, facing the scary gangster woman.

HARRY:

Oi, mad Maria. This is the men's showers. You're not allowed here.

CLEO:

Think I care 'bout that, sunshine? I killed my own husband in his bath, you know. You'd be amazed how easy you can wash blood away down here.

HARRY:

Are you planning to kill me?

CLEO:

(chuckling): Oh, no, Mr. Cleese. I'm not gonna kill you. (raises her knife to IAN'S throat) Can't make any promises for my nephew, though.

IAN:

Don't go with her, Harry! Don't do what she's asking!

CLEO:

Careful, Ian. You don't want Auntie Cleo to slip when I'm shaving you, do ya?

HARRY (advancing on CLEO):

LET GO OF HIM!

CLEO:

No, I don't think I will, sunshine. He's coming with us. You're both coming with us.(switching to blunt tone) So put your clothes back on and follow me!

HARRY:

Where are we going?

CLEO:

There's someone in Wing 5 wants to see you, Mr. Cleese. And he don't like to be kept waiting.

CUT TO: HARRY marching down a corridor on WING FIVE, standing right behind CLEO and IAN. As he follows her, THREE MORE CONVICTS, with hardened expressions, emerge from corners and fall behind him. One of these CONVICTS is holding MEDDIYAH by her wrists.

HARRY:

You as well, Meddiyah?

MEDDIYAH:

Yuri insists I attend this meeting as well as you, Harry.

HARRY:

Who's this Yuri?!

CLEO halts outside ROOM 530.

CLEO:

Don't fuss yourself, my son, you're just about to meet him.

CLEO turns the door handle and it opens into:

SCENE 5

ROOM 530: An expansive connection of three chambers, more like a penthouse than a jail cell. Two side wings connecting to an elaborate bedroom with silken sheets and a luxurious steel

kitchen. In the middle room stands a glossy wooden table laden with food, behind which YURI THE FUSE stands arguing with someone on the phone.

YURI THE FUSE is an OILY, DARK-HAIRED FAT MAN with a sharp nose and a thin moustache, much like a mixture between Dick Dastardly and Charles Laughton. At this moment, he's holding a piece of bread with his free hand and waving it while he shouts down the phone.

YURI:

I don't wanna hear any excuses, alright?! I sent an order down to the kitchen to have brown bread served with my meal, got that? BROWN bread, you know what BROWN bread is, don'tcha? It's what you're gonna be in 10 minutes if you don't take this white garbage back to the kitchen an' give me somethin' 'ealthy, alright?

YURI pauses to recover.

Oh, you'll be sorry, alright, mate! You know I'm allergic to white bread! Now send us up some 'ealthy brown, or I'm gonna come down there wiv a few of my boys, nail you to the floor, an' make you swallow it instead! You got that, son?

He slams down the phone and gives it the finger, then notices HARRY.

Oh, 'ello, grab a chair, Mr. Cleese. Make yerself at 'ome.

HARRY refuses YURI'S hand, but walks over to collect a chair regardless.

I'm Yuri. Yuri the Fuse. Pleased to meetcha.

HARRY:

Why do they call you 'the Fuse'?

IAN:

Because he's got a really short one, that's why.

CLEO knees him in his back, hard.

YURI:

I'm sorry about this, Mr. Cleese. I woz 'opin' we could meet under better circumstances.

HARRY:

How'd you know who I am?

YURI presses a buzzer and in comes PHENA, a security guard with hair in black braids and grey eyes. She has a SPECTACLED OWL on her shoulder.

YURI:

‘Arry, meet Phena. Phena’s one of me closest workers. Any time a new face appears in pokey, she’s the one ‘oo researches wot their name is, ‘ow they got ‘ere, wot they did before they got ‘ere, all that tripe. She’s a diamond, ain’t ya, Phena?

PHENA:

Yes I am, Mr. Yuri.

YURI:

Cleo saw you ‘ashin’ it out wiv our boy Sickness in the canteen yesterday, ‘Arry. She liked wot she saw. So she persuaded me to make you a job offer. Any questions?

HARRY:

Yeah, why does Phena have an owl?

YURI:

Wrong kind of question.

HARRY:

Okay. What kind of job offer?

YURI:

Oh, nothin’ too ‘ard, I’m sure. I’d like you to work for me. Do a little black ops, know wot I mean?

HARRY:

Black ops?!

CU: YURI’S cold blue eyes.

YURI:

Yeah, son, black ops! You’re gonna do some undercover soldier stuff for me outside of ‘ere! Spyin’, stealin’, shootin’ people I don’t like...

HARRY stands straight up.

HARRY:

No. I. *Won’t!*

YURI also stands straight up.

YURI:

Yes. You. Will, Mr. Cleese!

HARRY:

Do you even know how black ops works, mate? They're top-secret missions funded by the government themselves! Not by greedy fat jail-hogs like you! You've got no power to make me agree to this!

All the CONVICTS in the cell draw guns on HARRY (apart from CLEO). YURI just raises a hard finger to his eye.

YURI:

Wrong, my son. 'Alf the nutters in this prison work for me. I've got a bloke 'oo brings in weapons from outside, an' 'e can bribe the guards to look the other way. An' thanks to Phena, I know all the dirty secrets of every naughty little boy an' girl 'oo steps inside these walls! Mr. Minosz is only the guv'nor of Charybdis. Me?...I'm the king of it. (leans in close) So you'd better sit yerself down, my son, 'else you want us to find out if yer bulletproof too.

HARRY reluctantly returns to his seat, while the CONVICTS lower their guns.

I'll tell you 'ow it works, 'Arry, son. You do twelve little odd jobs for me, one task each year, startin' today, an' I'll see if I can get the screws to let you out early. We do that, you don't 'ave to see me ever again, everyone's 'appy. You game?

HARRY:

Suppose I tell you to stick your offer, Yuri? Are you gonna kill me?

YURI:

Kill you? I'd never kill you, son! Yer little friends, though...

One of YURI'S men raises his gun to MEDDIYAH'S head, while CLEO tightens her grip on IAN'S throat.

An' 'oo's gonna know we're the ones wot killed 'em? The nation already finks you've killed yer kiddies, Mr. Cleese. When they 'ear you've killed yer own cellmates, I reckon they'll put yer into Level 9 with the Bull. I'd be impressed if you survive one year with 'im. So wot's it gonna be?

HARRY covers his face with one hand, then glares back up at YURI.

HARRY:

Alright, Yuri. I'll work for you.

YURI grins and rubs his hands together.

So what's my first assignment?

YURI:

You'll like this one, 'Arry. Ever killed a lion before?

HARRY AND PHENA(simultaneously):

Yes.

HARRY pauses, and lets PHENA address YURI.

PHENA:

Mr. Cleese had to kill a lion back in 2008 when it attacked another businessman's daughters,
Sir. All 50 of his daughters.

IAN raises his eyebrows.

YURI:

Right, well this should be an easy task for you, my son. I've 'eard they've sighted a lioness
prowlin' the streets of Galway. Man-eater, by the sound of it. It's eaten 20 people an' I want yer
to kill it before it eats any more.

HARRY:

Right. Where is it now?

PHENA:

Our reports indicate the lioness was last seen on the fringes of the Imperial Hotel, Mr. Cleese.
Slaps a folder on the table.

YURI:

You should 'urry, 'Arry. This week the 'Otel's 'ostin' a "crackdown on crime speech" by Mayor
Manny Layers an' 'is wife, 'Elen Temnestra.

Looks at IAN.

Young Ian's parents.

CLEO:

And Helen's my sister.

HARRY stares at her.

What? You think Ian calls me Auntie for his own good?

HARRY stands up and collects the folder.

HARRY:

All right, Yuri. When do I leave?

YURI:

Your boat leaves in 'alf an hour, 'Arry. Phena 'ere will show you where you can get kitted out.

HARRY:

Fine. But Ian and Meddiyah are coming with me.

CLEO:

When did Yuri say you could get help?

HARRY pulls IAN from her grasp.

HARRY:

He's given his terms. Now I'm giving mine. Let my friends come with me, or I'm not doing this.

YURI:

Alright, Mr. Cleese. You've got yer wish.

His man releases MEDDIYAH.

Now follow Phena to the armoury so you can all get tooled up.

HARRY follows PHENA out of the room, IAN and MEDDIYAH behind him. He glares back at YURI before he leaves, and YURI smiles insincerely at him. As soon as all 3 of them have left the room, YURI'S phone starts ringing. He picks it up and answers it.

YURI:

'Ello, your 'lghness? Yes, 'e's taken the bait. The kitty should make short work of 'im...

SCENE 6:

THE PRISON BOAT, HALFWAY ACROSS THE IRISH SEA. HARRY, MEDDIYAH and IAN are all decked out in black ops gear, seated indoors below the shelter, while PHENA stands on the deck with her owl and the boat captain.

HARRY:

Ian?

IAN:

Yeah?

HARRY:

Is this Manny Layers bloke really your father?

IAN:

Yes...yes, he is, Mr. Cleese.

HARRY turns to face IAN.

HARRY:

You said to me you were a poor homeless kid, Ian. Why did you lie to me?

IAN:

Because I was protecting my family, Mr. Cleese. (hard stare)

HARRY raises an eyebrow.

When my dad got elected to his seat...some pothead gangster called Paris Prince took my mam captive. Wanted her for himself. So my dad sent me to get her back. That's why I was in the Galway Ant Gang. And that's also why I took the rap for Bella murdering an "*important young man*".

HARRY:

Then that councilman your girlfriend machete'd...

IAN:

That wasn't a councilman. That was Paris Prince. She killed him. But not before I got my mam out of there. If the police had known she'd done it, she'd have gone to jail and no-one would care. No-one except her own mam. But I took the rap for it. So did Pat and Eck. And that was

my father's shame, wasn't it? His sister-in-law a husband-murdering gangster...his wife stolen by a gangster...and his own son a gangster himself!

HARRY:

But you took the rap anyway...

Puts his hand on IAN'S shoulder.

Because you love her.

IAN:

Yes...yes, I do. But what now, Mr. Cleese? If we have to be in the same room as my father...

HARRY:

Whoa, Ian. Don't fuss yourself. I'll take care of you when that happens.

IAN:

Will you?

HARRY:

Yeah! What are friends for?

IAN puts down his gun, leans over and hugs HARRY. Then PHENA walks in and he lets him go again.

PHENA:

Alright, soldiers, at ease! We will be making landfall at Galway Harbour within 10 minutes. Those bulletproof vests and assault guns should be enough to defend you from the lioness, but just in case....

PHENA pulls out an authentic Irish Oak shillelagh.

HARRY stares at it in awe...then PHENA gives it to IAN.

Ian, you're a brave lad, but you're small, and easy to subdue. A blunt weapon should be useful in defending yourself.

PHENA'S OWL flies over to HARRY, perches on his shoulder, and hoots. He smiles at it.

We're on a tight schedule, soldiers. As soon as we make landfall, go directly to the Hotel and check in, but don't try making a scene, okay? As far as they know, we're just a routine security team in case of criminal interruptions.

IAN and MEDDIYAH nod and step out to watch the increasingly-nearer harbour.

Oh, and Mr. Cleese?

HARRY looks up and PHENA smiles.

Get through this mission alive, and we'll give you a little gift of your own.

HARRY:

Thanks, Phena.

SCENE 7:

INT. THE IMPERIAL HOTEL, GALWAY.

HARRY, MEDDIYAH and IAN are all kitted out in black ops gear, standing at reception.

RECEPTIONIST:

You okay there? What can I do for you?

HARRY:

We heard Manny Layers is doing a "crackdown on crime" speech here this week?

RECEPTIONIST:

Aye, that he is.

HARRY:

We've come here for security measures.

Holsters his gun.

RECEPTIONIST:

We appreciate the offer, strangers, but it's only a 30-minute speech. Surely there's no need-

MEDDIYAH:

You can't be too careful these days, sir. Our employer insists we stay here until the week's out, just to keep you safe.

RECEPTIONIST:

Okay, madam.

Hands out two keys.

There's rooms for you and the little lad, but we don't have anywhere left for you, sir.

Indicates Harry.

Enter NEEM, a small, bright maid with buzz-cut blonde hair and paw tattoos on her wrists. She stands behind Harry.

NEEM:

It's okay, Sir. I'll let you share my quarters.

HARRY eyes her suspiciously, but he still follows her.

INT: NEEM'S QUARTERS. A room much like a cellar, with wine racks on both walls, and dimmed bulbs. HARRY sits at a table, while NEEM holds a tea-tray. Muted 80's music plays on a CD player.

NEEM:

I've got to take these trays to a couple upstairs, Sir. Make yourself at home while I'm off, won't you?

NEEM walks off with the tray. HARRY tries to lie back, but then he sniffs suspiciously.

CU: HARRY'S narrowed eyes. He raises his walkie-talkie to his mouth.

HARRY:

Meddiyah?

MEDDIYAH(through walkie-talkie):

Yeah?

HARRY:

I'm smelling something weird down here. I'm gonna investigate. Over.

MEDDIYAH:

Okay, Harry. But be careful. Out.

HARRY rises from the table, then walks over, holding his machine gun, and tiptoes towards the door at the back of the room. As soon as he's close enough, he pushes the door open to see...

ANGLE ON: HARRY, the door framing him, as his torch illuminates a dead, outstretched hand, stained with blood and surrounded by flies. There are more hands, and all of them attached to clearly-lifeless bodies.

CU: HARRY'S revolted face. He looks like he's about to vomit. Behind him, the 80's music becomes clearer and more distinct: *Man-Eater* by Darryl Hall and John Oates.

NEEM(O/S):

Are you okay, sir?

HARRY wheels around, facing NEEM with his loaded gun. She stares over his shoulder and looks worried.

NEEM:

It's not what it looks like.

HARRY(growling):

Really? Because what it looks like to me...is that all those people in there were killed...by a big cat...

He removes the safety latch.

And you're hiding something about that from me.

NEEM'S eyes widen and she tries grabbing a knife from the table, but HARRY opens fire on her, blowing her across the room and into a wall.

For a few moments, NEEM lies motionless, but then she raises her head to glare at HARRY, and rises to her feet again, brushing the bullets down from her tunic. Not one bullet went through her skin.

NEEM:

You want the big cat?

NEEM'S blue eyes turn amber, and a growl creeps into her voice.

I'll *show* you the big cat.

HARRY watches in horror as NEEM drops onto all fours, her hands widening into paws, her muscles bulging so hard they shred her clothes, and yellow fur growing from her skin.

CU: NEEM'S gaping mouth, her teeth growing into impressive fangs, her gums going black, and her tongue becoming wide and rough.

HARRY now has a horrified expression, as he stares upon what was once NEEM, but is now a

massive LIONESS, teeth bared.

HARRY(shouting into his walkie-talkie):

MEDDIYAH! I'VE FOUND THE LIONESS!!!

NEEM THE LIONESS roars and jumps at HARRY, who narrowly dodges so that she hits the wine rack instead. Thinking fast, HARRY grabs the wine rack and pulls it off its hinges and down on top of her, burying the lioness under a mountain of glass and wood. He then high-tails it out of NEEM'S room and up the stairs.

CU: HARRY'S face as he runs upstairs. He appears close to wetting himself out of fear, but he still takes time to dodge the staff he's bypassing.

At the top of the stairs, he runs into MEDDIYAH.

MEDDIYAH:

Harry! What happened down there?

HARRY:

Bad news, Meddiyah! I've found the lioness. We need to find and defend Mr. Layers NOW.

MEDDIYAH:

What about that maid? Did she know about the lioness?

HARRY:

SHE *IS* THE LIONESS!!

NEEM THE LIONESS appears roaring, and pounces on HARRY, knocking him forwards through the double doors and into...

INT. THE DINING ROOM, where a large crowd are gathered. MANNY LAYERS, a tall, red-haired man, and his dark-haired wife HELEN TEMNESTRA stand by the podium.

Everyone's attention turns to HARRY and NEEM, her pinning him down, him holding his machine gun in her mouth to keep her teeth from his throat.

Growling, NEEM jerks her head and pulls the gun out of HARRY'S hands. She then slams both paws on his wrists, pinning them and enabling her to lean down towards one hand, teeth bared for his fingers.

IAN(O/S):

DIE, LIONESS!!!

IAN sprints onto the scene, unloading his machine gun onto NEEM. She raises her head, growling and facing him. The bullets just bounce off her fur harmlessly, and any time a bullet nearly hits her eyes, she just blinks and deflects them.

HARRY:

IAN, NO! SHE'S BULLETPROOF!

NEEM jumps off HARRY and onto IAN, prompting the millionaire-turned convict to stagger to his feet, run over and grab the lioness around her stomach.

While IAN holds NEEM'S head up and away from his throat, HARRY flips himself over onto his back, flipping NEEM with him and slamming her head into the floor.

Dazed, NEEM starts kicking out, throwing HARRY off her. She rolls onto her feet, then glares at the surrounding crowd.

As people start screaming, NEEM prepares to pounce, but then a ball of fire hits the ground in front of her, startling her.

HARRY stares up to see MEDDIYAH floating towards him, her hands surrounded with flames, and her eyes glowing even brighter.

HARRY:

You really *are* a witch, Meddiyah.

NEEM growls and dives at HARRY, tackling him over yet again. As he rolls helplessly, IAN slides the shillelagh over to him with his foot.

HARRY grabs the shillelagh and whips NEEM with it. CU of the LIONESS' face as HARRY hits her, mouth going sideways and spit flying.

NEEM snarls and tries swiping HARRY with her right paw, but he just grabs it and swipes it across her left cheek. She roars in pain: her cheek now sports large claw-marks in it.

HARRY:

Not immune to that, are you?

NEEM growls and bites down on HARRY'S bulletproof vest. Her teeth go right through it and HARRY gasps. Then NEEM swings her head and tosses the grown man across the room.

HARRY takes a few moments to recover himself, as NEEM stalks towards him.

HARRY:

Guns? No. Blunt force? No. Knives? Probably no...

NEEM is too close for comfort.

Right, let's go old school!

HARRY and NEEM dive towards one another at the same time- his hands reach her throat, he latches on, and he lands and rolls over.

ANGLE ON: NEEM and HARRY, rolling around locked together. He winds his legs around her back, while keeping his hands tight around her throat. NEEM snarls, desperately reaching up and clawing at HARRY'S arms, but she can't gain proper purchase. He tightens his grasp, gritting his teeth and sweating as the audience watches tensely.

After a few seconds, NEEM'S struggles grow weaker, her snarling fainter. As HARRY notices this, he nods, then moves his whole arms up to NEEM'S neck, winds them around it and...

SNAP!

Everyone gasps, and HARRY lies there for a few minutes, breathing hard and with a dead lioness filling his lap.

IAN walks over to lean over HARRY.

IAN:

Are you okay, Harry?

HARRY reaches up and grasps IAN'S hand.

HARRY:

Yeah, Ian....I'm okay. I'm keeping your shillelagh, though.

By this point, MANNY and HELEN have walked over to get a good look at their new saviour.

MANNY:

Ian?...*Our* Ian?

IAN:

H-hello, Dad and Mam. I'm with him.

HARRY roles NEEM'S body off his lap and stands up before MANNY. The Mayor of Galway shakes his hand. HELEN also shakes his hand.

HELEN:

We're indebted to you, sir. How can we repay you?

HARRY:

I don't want much, your Honours. Just some good ice cream will do. Then I've got to get some answers...

SCENE 8: YURI'S CELL.

YURI AND CLEO are having a good laugh, while settling into a *bombe glacée*.

YURI:

'E actually imagined I'd clear 'is name? Stuff that! 'Ow'm I ever gonna clear 'is name if 'e don't come back alive?(laughs maliciously)I mean, I sent 'im after a shape-changin' lioness with invulnerable skin! 'Ow's 'e 'ope to kill somethin' like that? 'E can't, that's 'ow!(Giggles) Brown bread! 'E'll be brown bread by the time I leave this prison a free man! 'Im an' that little Irish turd an' the witch girl! Queen 'Era's gonna be a very 'appy la-dy!

CLEO:

Never mind Queen Hera, Yuri. Fancy some more brandy?

YURI:

'Ow can I refuse? (laughs)

Suddenly, the dead body of NEEM THE LIONESS flies into the room and lands on YURI'S table. YURI screams, and CLEO drops her brandy.

HARRY steps into the room, still in his black ops gear.

YURI:

Gordon Bennet, 'Arry?! D'you mind? There's lioness all over me *bombe glacée* now!!

HARRY:

Funny that, Yuri. I was gonna ask you about that lioness. And I'd appreciate some honesty for a change.

YURI:

What d'you mean, honesty?...

HARRY grabs YURI by the collar and hauls him over the table. CLEO desperately reaches for a

gun, but MEDDIYAH holds a trench knife to her throat.

MEDDIYAH:

Don't try it, Cleo. Shoot him, and I'll cut your throat where you stand.

IAN:

Aye, don't push her, Auntie. Have you noticed none of your boys are here to defend you?

HARRY:

That lioness wasn't a normal animal, was it, Yuri? She was some kind of ...bulletproof monster...and *you knew*. Didn't you?

YURI:

She wasn't too much for you, though, was she, 'Arry? You beat 'er!

HARRY:

BARELY! And you knew she could pretend to be human too, didn't you?! I'd say you were trying to get me killed. I'd say you were *hoping* to get me killed!

YURI:

Why'd I wanna do that?!

HARRY:

I don't know why! I'm not a criminal mastermind! All I know is you were setting me up!

YURI (sobbing):

Don't kill me, 'Arry! You wouldn't 'urt me, would yer?

HARRY loosens his grip.

HARRY:

No...I won't kill you, Yuri. I'll finish the rest of my tasks like a man, but next mission I go on, I want the truth about what I'm facing, or you can kiss your privileges goodbye!

YURI:

You've completed yer first task, son! Return to yer cell wing an' meet me again next year to find out Task Number 2!

HARRY:

Fine. But I'm taking this lioness with me.

Picks up NEEM.

'Cos I trust her and my friends with my back more than I trust you.

HARRY walks out of the cell.

Come on, Meddiyah. Come on, Ian. Let's leave Mr. Fat Gangster to his own devices.

As soon as MEDDIYAH and IAN also leave, YURI glares at CLEO.

YURI:

Fat lot of 'elp you were, Cleo! I near got butchered!

CLEO:

Shut up and clean your pants, you defecating wimp!

SCENE 9

HARRY AND MEDDIYAH'S CELL.

MEDDIYAH stands over NEEM THE LIONESS, holding one of her now-detached claws. Wearing surgical goggles, MEDDIYAH leans in and makes a cut.

HARRY and IAN are standing over MEDDIYAH'S polecat and snake tank, dropping mice in it. The snakes stare up endearingly at HARRY, who smiles back at them.

HARRY(V/O):

My name is Harry Cleese. I'm a billionaire playboy currently serving 12 years in a high-security jail for murdering my two sons.

OUTSIDE THE CELL, IN THE CANTEEN. PHENA hands HARRY a tablet containing information on hallucinogens. He frowns and reads it.

My friends don't think I did it. Neither do I. But until I find out who did, I have to serve my sentence, and carry out odd tasks for Yuri the Fuse.

HARRY walks into the canteen with a full plate. CLEO hurries away from him as he walks over to PAT and ECK, both of whom applaud him and shake his hand as he sits down.

That first task showed me that the world's a lot more complex than I imagined. More complex, and more dangerous.

HARRY reappears in his cell, checking IAN'S shillelagh on his shelf. MEDDIYAH appears behind him. He turns and raises his eyebrows curiously. She grins and gives him a thumbs-up.

But I'm not too worried about that. I've got plenty of good things on my side.

OUTSIDE THE ENTRANCE TO THE BOXING RING. Two of the guards are conversing with a shadowy figure, then they let him through.

I've got two friends, a former gang boy and a witch...

THE MAN walks towards the ring down a low-lit corridor. People watch him on either side, including IAN and MEDDIYAH, who grin and give him more thumbs-up.

I've got that helpful warden, Phena, and her owl...

PHENA shows him onto the ring. Her owl hoots as he passes it.

I've got my brain and my muscles...

THE MAN turns and raises his gloves to the crowd, who cheer(CASSY DUSSEZ blows him a kiss).

ANGLE ON: THE OTHER BOXER, a hard white skinhead whose initial smirk turns to a worried scowl as he takes in his opponent...

HARRY, clad in boxing shorts, gloves, and NEEM THE LIONESS' skin draped over his shoulders and head like a cape-helmet combo.

Oh, yeah...and a really nice lion-skin cape.

THE REFEREE steps between HARRY and SKINHEAD to signal the fight's start. HARRY then steps back, swishes his cape and...

ANGLE ON: HARRY throwing his first punch, from SKINHEAD'S POV. CUT TO BLACK as he hits him.

THE END