

= There 's No Disgrace Like Home =

" There 's No Disgrace Like Home " is the fourth episode of The Simpsons ' first season . It first aired on the Fox network in the United States on January 28 , 1990 . In the episode , Homer becomes ashamed of his family after a catastrophic company picnic and decides to enroll them in therapy . The therapist struggles to solve their problems but eventually gives up and refunds their payment .

It was an early episode , showing early designs for a few recurring characters . The episode is inspired by the comedy of Laurel and Hardy and features cultural references to films such as Citizen Kane and Freaks as well as the Batman and Twilight Zone television series . Critics noted that the characters acted differently from the way they would in later seasons . In November 1996 , The BBC chose it as the first episode to be aired , when they started showing the series , later being beat in the ratings by Sabrina .

= = Plot = =

Homer takes his family to a company picnic organized by his boss , Mr. Burns , and hopes they will not embarrass him . After Bart , Lisa and Marge all misbehave , Homer is embarrassed by their behavior . Later on , he notices that Burns is drawn to a " normal " family that treats one another with respect and shows his blatant disgust for his own family . Homer wonders why he is cursed with a troubled family who misbehave and disrespects anyone , especially after the man from the normal perfect family admits he pities Homer .

Determined to improve his family 's behavior , Homer attempts to get them to sit at the table properly , which goes awry as the family prefers to eat while watching TV . When Marge , Bart and Lisa claim there 's nothing wrong with them , he decides to prove to them that there is something wrong . He takes them on a tour of the neighborhood , peeking through living room windows to observe how happy families spend time together . The rest of the Simpsons are unnerved by Homer 's sudden rash behavior along with unnecessarily spying on their neighbors and retreat quickly back to the safety of their own home . Depressed by the outing , he stops by Moe 's Tavern for a drink . After getting into a fight with Barney , Homer later sees a commercial for Dr. Marvin Monroe 's Family Therapy Center . Dr. Monroe guarantees " family bliss or double your money back . " This gives Homer an idea to improve his family 's behavior .

Homer makes an appointment at the clinic and pays for it by pawning their television . This only frustrates the rest of the Simpsons as he takes them to the scheduled appointment . In the waiting room , they claim the family doesn 't have a problem and are silenced by Homer . Dr. Monroe encourages them to express their unhappiness with a series of exercises . The first is a drawing exercise , which he encourages them to draw out the source of their problems . Most the Simpsons vent out their anger by drawing Homer as they see him . When Dr. Monroe observes it , he realizes that Homer is likely the source of their issues in the family . This is evident when he proves his own inattentive nature in being lost in the exercise and having the family view him as such , including being too strict as a disciplinarian . The other methods in getting the family to talk to each other in a normal matter fails . Dr. Monroe finally takes matters into his own hands and sends them all to a generator room , allowing them to deliver electric shocks to each other . The family shocks one another to the point of causing a power drain on the city . Unable to help them , Dr. Monroe gives the Simpsons double their money back . With a fresh sense of family unity , they use the money to buy a new television set .

= = Production = =

The episode shows telltale signs of being one of the earliest produced . The characters act completely differently from later seasons ; Lisa , for example , is an undisciplined brat , Marge gets drunk and is inattentive , while Homer is the voice of reason . These roles are reversed in later episodes . It was an early episode for Mr. Burns , who was voiced by Christopher Collins in the

previous episode , " Homer 's Odyssey " . Originally , the character was influenced by Ronald Reagan , a concept which was later dropped . The idea that he would greet his employees using index cards was inspired by the way Reagan would greet people . The episode marks the first time Burns refers to " releasing the hounds " .

The episode marked the first appearance of Dr. Marvin Monroe and Itchy & Scratchy ; the latter had previously appeared in the shorts . It also marked the first appearance of yellow Smithers , who was drawn as an African @-@ American in the previous episode . Eddie and Lou also appeared for the first time , although Lou was mistakenly animated with yellow instead of black , as he would later become . Lou was named after Lou Whitaker , a former Major League Baseball player .

The idea behind the shock therapy scene was based on Laurel and Hardy throwing pies at each other . The scene was rearranged in the editing room ; it played out differently when first produced . The edits to this scene were preliminary , but well @-@ received , and remained unchanged in the finished product .

= = Cultural references = =

The episode 's title is a parody of the famous phrase " There 's no place like Home " from " Home ! Sweet Home ! " , an 1823 song by Henry Bishop and John Howard Payne . The scene in which the family enters Burns ' Manor contains two cultural references . The Manor resembles Charles Foster Kane 's mansion from the 1941 film Citizen Kane . The characters refer to it as " stately Burns Manor " , a reference to the Batman TV series . In addition , there is a reference to Freaks , the Tod Browning cult horror film , in the repetition of the line " one of us " . When Marge gets drunk , she sings Dean Martin 's " Hey , Brother , Pour the Wine " .

The shock therapy scene is reminiscent of the 1971 film A Clockwork Orange . The shock therapy scene appeared in the 1990 film Die Hard 2 .

The Paul Mauriat version of the 1967 song L 'amour est bleu can be briefly heard in the episode .

= = Reception = =

In its original broadcast , " There 's No Disgrace Like Home " finished forty @-@ fifth in ratings for the week of January 22 ? 28 , 1990 , with a Nielsen rating of 11 @.@ 2 , equivalent to approximately 10 @.@ 3 million viewing households . It was the second highest @-@ rated show on the Fox network that week , following Married ... with Children . Since airing , the episode has received mixed reviews from television critics . The authors of the book I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide , Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood , note : " It 's very strange to see Homer pawning the TV set in an attempt to save the family ; if this episode had come later Marge would surely have taken this stance . "

They continue , " A neat swipe at family counseling with some great set pieces ; we 're especially fond of the perfect version of the Simpsons and the electric @-@ shock aversion therapy . " In a DVD review of the first season , David B. Grelck gave the episode a rating of 2 @.@ 0 / 5 @.@ 0 , placing it as one of the worst of the season . Colin Jacobson at DVD Movie Guide said in a review that the episode is " [his] least favorite episode of Season One " and further commented : " Homer feels embarrassed by the others ? Marge acts poorly in public and doesn 't care about the upkeep of the family ? Lisa (Yeardley Smith) engages in pranks and silliness ? This ain 't the family we 've grown to know and love . "

This episode was one of the first seen by British viewers . It was the first episode to be broadcast on terrestrial television by the BBC on November 23 , 1996 on a Saturday at 5 : 30pm , because the episodes were shown out of order . The episode was screened with five million viewers , slightly less than the show , Dad 's Army , which previously held the timeslot . The episode also faced competition from ITV 's screening of Sabrina the Teenage Witch .

= = Home release = =

The episode was released first on home video in the United Kingdom , as part of a VHS release titled The Simpsons Collection ; the episode was paired with season one episode " Bart the General " . It was released in the US on the VHS release The Best of The Simpsons , Vol . 1 (1997) , paired with " Life on the Fast Lane " . It was later re @-@ released in the US in a collector 's edition boxed set of the first three volumes of The Best of The Simpsons collections . It was re @-@ released in the UK as part of VHS boxed set of the complete first season , released in November 1999 . The episode 's debut on the DVD format was as a part of The Simpsons season one DVD set , which was released on September 25 , 2001 . Groening , Jean , and Reiss participated in the DVD 's audio commentary . A digital edition of the series ' first season was published December 20 , 2010 in the United States containing the episode , through Amazon Video and iTunes .