

= Lisa vs. Malibu Stacy =

" Lisa vs. Malibu Stacy " is the fourteenth episode of The Simpsons ' fifth season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on February 17 , 1994 . In the episode , Lisa challenges the makers of the Malibu Stacy doll to create a less sexist doll . Together with the original creator of Malibu Stacy , Stacy Lovell , Lisa creates the doll Lisa Lionheart in an effort to positively influence young girls .

The episode was written by Bill Oakley and Josh Weinstein , and directed by Jeffrey Lynch . The episode 's plot was inspired by the Teen Talk Barbie line of talking dolls , which spoke short phrases typical of a middle class American teenager . Kathleen Turner guest starred in the episode as Stacy Lovell , creator of Malibu Stacy . It features cultural references to action figures such as Ken and G.I. Joe . Since airing , the episode has received mostly positive reviews from television critics . It acquired a Nielsen rating of 11 @. @ 6 , and was the second highest @-@ rated show on the Fox network the week it aired .

= = Plot = =

Dr. Hibbert introduces a frail Ben Matlock to a crowd of excited seniors at the Grand Opening of the Center for Geriatric Medicine . After seeing his idol mobbed to the ground by fans , Abe becomes aware of his mortality and gives the family their inheritances early . He leaves the family a box of old silver dollars ( which Abe explains he got when Rockefeller flew by his house in a balloon , dropping money ) that they decide to spend at the mall right away . At the mall , Lisa sees the new talking Malibu Stacy doll in a toy store . Throughout the trip home , Abe will not stop telling stories and spouting useless advice , making the family shun him . Grampa asks if its because he reminds them of the grim spectre of death , but Homer explains that although they love him , Grampa is an annoying old crank who is unpleasant to spend time with . Lisa is anxious to hear what the talking Malibu Stacy has to say , but is disappointed with her sexist phrases ( such as " Don 't ask me , I 'm just a girl " and " Thinking too much gives you wrinkles " ) . Lisa is angry that no one else can see the ridiculousness of the doll . She and Abe sit at the kitchen table , bemoaning how they are treated because of their age while both of them decide to change , Abe to get a job , and Lisa to find Malibu Stacy 's creator , Stacy Lovell .

Lisa visits Waylon Smithers , owner of the world 's largest Malibu Stacy collection , and asks for help in finding Lovell , who was ousted from the Malibu Stacy company in 1974 . Lisa bikes to Lovell 's house and plays one of the doll 's phrases over the intercom . The gate immediately opens . Lisa and Lovell decide to create a new talking doll , Lisa Lionheart , voiced by Lisa herself . The doll is quietly released , but the executives of Malibu Stacy have a meeting in which they agree that Lisa 's doll is a real threat because it might hurt the sales of their doll . Meanwhile , Abe struggles with his new job at Krusty Burger , suffering a war flashback at the drive @-@ in and losing his false teeth making burgers . He soon becomes angry at the way seniors are treated , and quits . After a slow initial release , Lisa Lionheart suddenly gains popularity among the fans of Malibu Stacy after being featured in Kent Brockman 's news show . At the mall , as kids , and Smithers , rush out to buy Lisa Lionheart , a cart of new Malibu Stacy dolls with new hats is wheeled right into the path of the group running for the Lionheart display . Lisa appeals to them that it is just the same doll with a " stupid , cheap " hat , but they all prefer to stick with Malibu Stacy , largely due to the encouragement of Smithers , except for one little girl , who leaves with a Lisa Lionheart doll . Despite the fact that the doll is a failure , Lisa takes heart that her message was able to get through to at least one little girl .

= = Production = =

The episode was written by Bill Oakley and Josh Weinstein , and directed by Jeffrey Lynch . Before the episode aired , Malibu Stacy had already appeared many times on the show as one of Lisa 's dolls . The staff were trying to come up with an idea for an episode by going through the companies in the Simpsons universe , and Oakley suggested an episode involving the Malibu Stacy company .

The plot of the episode was inspired by the Teen Talk Barbie line of talking dolls that caused controversy in the United States in the early 1990s . In July 1992 , Mattel released Teen Talk Barbie , which spoke a number of phrases including " Will we ever have enough clothes ? " , " I love shopping ! " , and " Wanna have a pizza party ? " Each doll was programmed to say four out of 270 possible phrases , so that no two dolls were likely to be the same . One of these 270 phrases was " Math class is tough ! " . Although only about 1 @. @ 5 % of all the dolls sold said the phrase , it led to criticism from the American Association of University Women because they deemed that to be demeaning to women . In October 1992 , Mattel announced that Teen Talk Barbie would no longer say the phrase , and offered a swap to anyone who owned a doll that did .

Oakley and Weinstein decided to include Abe in the episode because they had an " obsession " with old people . Weinstein said they both " love them and seem to really hate them " at the same time . He also said that they enjoy writing for characters such as Abe and Mr. Burns because of their " out @- @ datedness " , and because he and Oakley get to use dictionaries for looking up " old time slang " . Executive producer David Mirkin thought it was difficult to make Abe funny because he is a " boring and tedious " character . He thinks that even though " Abe 's doing all these complaints , what makes him funny is that the things he says are actually funny in the context of the boring and tedium . " Mirkin thought this was a " big challenge , and Bill and Josh pulled it off very well . "

When the episode was in production , Oakley 's wife Rachel Pulido was an enthusiastic Barbie collector . Oakley therefore spent a lot of time going to Barbie conventions across the United States and met many different collectors . At one convention , Oakley met the man who owned the world 's largest Barbie collection . The meeting between the two inspired the part of the episode where Lisa visits Smithers and it is revealed that Smithers is the owner of the world 's largest Malibu Stacy collection . Kathleen Turner guest starred in the episode as Stacy Lovell . Mirkin thought Turner was " completely game " when she showed up at the recording studio to record her lines as she " nailed " her lines really fast . He added that he enjoyed directing her and he thought she had one of the best performances ever on The Simpsons .

= = Cultural references = =

At the beginning of the episode , Abe watches his idol Ben Matlock talk to a crowd of excited seniors at the Grand Opening of the Center for Geriatric Medicine . Ben Matlock is a character from the NBC / ABC television series Matlock , portrayed by Andy Griffith and created by Dean Hargrove . The crowd cheer for Matlock by singing a slightly changed version of the " We Love You , Conrad " song from stage musical Bye Bye Birdie . Homer dances on giant piano keys recessed in the floor of the toy store , spoofing a scene from the 1988 film Big . Lisa wants Lisa Lionheart to have " the wisdom of Gertrude Stein , the wit of Cathy Guisewite , the tenacity of Nina Totenberg , the common sense of Elizabeth Cady Stanton , and the down @- @ to @- @ earth good looks of Eleanor Roosevelt . "

Stacy Lovell 's list of husbands features the action figures Ken , Johnny West , G.I. Joe , Doctor Colossus , and Steve Austin . Lisa 's story about the Malibu Stacy doll saying phrases that are considered demeaning to women is based on the Teen Talk Barbie line of dolls and how they caused controversy . During one scene in the episode , one girl 's Malibu Stacy doll says " My Spidey Sense is tingling ! Anyone call for a web @- @ slinger ? " , a reference to a practical joke by the Barbie Liberation Organization in the early 1990s in which the voiceboxes of talking Barbie and G.I. Joe toys were swapped .

= = Reception = =

In its original broadcast , " Lisa vs. Malibu Stacy " finished 23rd in the ratings for the week of February 14 ? 20 , 1994 , with a Nielsen rating of 11 @. @ 6 , equivalent to 11 million viewing households . It was the second highest @- @ rated show on the Fox network that week , following Beverly Hills , 90210 .

Since airing , the episode has received mostly positive reviews from television critics . DVD Movie

Guide 's Colin Jacobson thought the episode was " good but not great " , despite " more than a few strong moments , like the hilarious shot of Bart at the gay rights parade . " He added that " most years this would be an A @-@ list program , but it ? s one of season five ? s lesser lights despite a generally high level of quality . " The authors of the book I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide , Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood , described the episode as " Lisa at her crusading best , Homer at his stupidest and Abe getting all the best lines again , especially at Krusty Burgers . Kathleen Turner 's spot as the real Malibu Stacy is superb . " Janica Lockhart of The Easterner called the episode a " classic " and added : " The episode takes on misogynist views , but in a humorous way , that only The Simpsons can master . " Patrick Bromley of DVD Verdict gave the episode a grade of A , and DVD Talk 's Bill Gibron gave it a score of 5 out of 5 . The episode is one of Oakley and Weinstein 's favorites from their time as writers on the show . One of Mirkin 's favorite jokes on the show is the scene in this episode where Abe cycles down the street , shouting " Look at me , I 'm acting young ! " before Lisa 's Malibu Stacy doll catches the front wheel of the bike , sending Abe flying into an open grave .

In the book The Simpsons and Philosophy : The D 'oh ! of Homer , Aeon J. Skoble cited the episode as an example in his piece titled : " Do We Admire or Laugh at Lisa ? " . He wrote : " The fact that the less intellectual doll is vastly preferred over Lisa 's doll , even though Lisa 's objections are reasonable , demonstrates the ways in which reasonable ideas can be made to take a back seat to having fun and going with the flow . This debate is often played out in the real world , of course : Barbie is the subject of perennial criticism along the lines of Lisa 's critique of Malibu Stacy , yet remains immensely popular , and in general , we often see intellectual critiques of toys dismissed as ' out of touch ' or elitist . "