

= Moaning Lisa =

" Moaning Lisa " is the sixth episode of The Simpsons ' first season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on February 11 , 1990 . The episode was written by Al Jean and Mike Reiss , and was directed by Wes Archer . Ron Taylor guest stars in the episode as Bleeding Gums Murphy . The episode deals with Lisa 's depression and her attempts to sublimate it by playing her saxophone . It received positive reviews from television critics .

= = Plot = =

Lisa wakes up one morning saddened . At school , she gets in trouble with her music teacher for improvising , and her gym teacher sends home a note to her parents saying she was reluctant to play dodgeball . At home , Homer and Bart pummel each other at video boxing , but despite Homer 's attempts , he is unable to defeat Bart. Homer and Marge try to cheer Lisa up , but she is consumed with worry over all the suffering in the world . In her room , Lisa hears music coming from outside her window . She follows the music through town and meets Bleeding Gums Murphy , a soulful saxophonist playing the blues . Lisa learns about expressing herself through her music from him , only to be discovered and whisked away by Marge .

Homer goes to the arcade and enlists the help of a local video game wizard , while Marge takes Lisa to band practice . She tells Lisa to smile no matter how she feels inside , to suppress her emotions in order to be popular , and that happiness will follow . But when she sees Lisa hiding her true feelings and being taken advantage of by her classmates , Marge changes her tune and tells Lisa to be herself and her support helps Lisa to feel genuinely happy . When Homer returns home , he is about to defeat Bart in a rematch but Marge unplugs the game console to announce Lisa 's recovery , while Bart declares his retirement as undefeated video boxing champ . Later , the Simpsons visit a jazz club to hear Bleeding Gums Murphy sing a blues number written by Lisa .

= = Production = =

" Moaning Lisa " was the first episode of the series to focus on Lisa . The idea for it was suggested by The Simpsons producer James L. Brooks , who wanted to do an episode where Lisa was sad but she did not know why . The writers also felt that they had done several " jokey " episodes on the show and wanted to try something new that was " really emotional and sweet " . The song Lisa sings in this episode later reappeared in expanded form on The Simpsons Sing the Blues CD .

Mr. Largo , Lisa 's music teacher , was partly inspired by a music teacher Matt Groening had as a kid . The designs of the boxers in the video game Homer and Bart play were loosely based on Homer and Bart , and the referee in the game was based on a character from Matt Groening 's Life in Hell comic strip . Bleeding Gums Murphy was loosely based on the famous blues musician Blind Lemon Jefferson . Ralph Wiggum , Bleeding Gums Murphy , and Jacqueline Bouvier (during Marge 's childhood flashback) all make their first (going by production order rather than airdate) appearances on The Simpsons in this episode .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast , " Moaning Lisa " finished 34th place in the weekly ratings for the week of February 5 ? February 11 , 1990 with a Nielsen rating of 13 @. @ 8 . It was the highest rated show on the Fox Network that week . The authors of the book I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide , Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood , said : " Certain scenes of this , the most syrupy of Simpsons episodes , sent viewers raised on the later seasons scurrying to the bathroom .

Yes , the final moments may give you goosepimples , and are a world away from the anti @-@ schmaltz normally associated with the series , but there is still much to recommend here . In fact , the Homer ? Bart subplot is more successful than the main storyline ; Homer 's nightmare about

their relationship is genuinely disturbing . " In a DVD review of the first season , David B. Grelck gave the episode a rating of 2 @. @ 5 / 5 and added : " Lisa develops much of her future personality in this episode .

The family dynamic is starting to fall into place , as is the relationship between Homer and Lisa . " Colin Jacobson at DVD Movie Guide said in a review that " overall , this was a pretty drab episode " and added that " it had some moments , such as the videogame boxing matches between Homer and Bart , but Lisa lacked the strength at this point to carry an entire show . "

= = 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 " Homer 's Odyssey " . It was released in the US on the VHS release The Best of The Simpsons , Vol . 2 (1997) , paired with " Bart the General " . In the United States , it was later re released in an collector 's edition boxed set of the first three volumes of The Best of The Simpsons collections .

In the United Kingdom , it was re released as part of VHS boxed set of the complete first season , released in November 1999 . The episode 's début on the DVD format was as a part of The Simpsons season one DVD set , which was released on September 25 , 2001 . Groening , Reiss , Archer , and Jean 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 .