

= Clown in the Dumps =

" Clown in the Dumps " is the season premiere of the twenty @-@ sixth season of the animated television series The Simpsons , and the 553rd episode of the series overall . It aired in the United States on Fox on September 28 , 2014 , with " The Simpsons Guy " , a crossover episode of Family Guy with The Simpsons , airing afterwards . This episode was dedicated in memory of Louis Castellaneta , the father of The Simpsons voice actor Dan Castellaneta . It was written by Joel H. Cohen and directed by Steven Dean Moore , with Don Hertzfeldt directing a sequence in the opening titles . Jeff Ross , Sarah Silverman and David Hyde Pierce guest starred as themselves , with Jackie Mason and Kelsey Grammer reprising their respective roles as Rabbi Krustofski and Sideshow Bob , while Maurice LaMarche voiced several minor characters .

In the episode , Krusty the Clown is offended by a comedy roast and asks his father , Rabbi Krustofski , if he believes that he is funny . His father disagrees and then dies , leaving Krusty upset that his father did not admire his work . After an alcohol @-@ induced coma , Krusty vows to do good in the world , and eventually with the help of Bart discovers that his father did enjoy his work . Meanwhile , due to the death of Krusty 's father , Lisa obsesses over the health and safety of her father Homer .

In October 2013 , during the promotion of the previous season of the show , executive producer Al Jean revealed that a character would die in this episode . In July 2014 , on the announcement of the title of the episode , several media outlets incorrectly presumed that Krusty would die . The choice of character to die was deemed by some critics as anti @-@ climactic due to Rabbi Krustofski 's minor role in the show , although other reviewers praised its conclusion to the relationship between Krusty and his father .

= = Plot = =

Krusty the Clown appears on a comedy roast by Jeff Ross and Sarah Silverman , and is offended by them . He seeks the advice of his father , Rabbi Krustofski , on whether he is funny ; the Rabbi says he always thought he was " eh ... " and dies suddenly , right before he 's about to tell Krusty what he really thinks of his comedy . As his father 's last words seemed to be dismissive , and believing that nobody finds him funny anymore , Krusty quits his show .

Bart attempts to reinspire Krusty by showing him old episodes of the show , but he picks up on the repetitive nature of his own jokes , and binge drinks in anger . He passes out and has a vision of himself in Jewish Heaven , where he meets Rodney Dangerfield . Rabbi Krustofski then appears and tells Krusty that Jews do not believe in Heaven , and thus he should do more to help others . An act of kindness does not seem to make him happier , but Bart takes Krusty to the synagogue , where Rabbi Krustofski 's favorite Rabbi recites Krusty 's jokes on religion . Krusty therefore deduces that his father did find him funny , and sees him again in Jewish Heaven , where Jesus turns Dangerfield 's water into a Bloody Mary .

Triggered by the death of Krusty 's father , Lisa becomes obsessed with protecting her own father , Homer , from getting hurt . She wraps him in bubble wrap , which ends up saving his life when Otto 's school bus plows into the garden . Eventually Marge and Bart talk some sense into Lisa , that while it is nice of her to be concerned for her father , she should not force Homer to take it easy on himself and just let him live his life .

= = Production = =

In October 2013 , in a conference to promote the 25th season of the show , producer Al Jean revealed that a major character would die in this episode . The character would have appeared more than twice in the show , and be voiced by an Emmy Award @-@ winning voice actor who won an Emmy for the role as the character . Later that month , following the death of Marcia Wallace , it was confirmed that it would not be her character , Edna Krabappel . Voice actor Hank Azaria , whose roles include Apu Nahasapeemametil and Moe Szyslak , stated that it would not be one of his

characters . It was shown at the 2014 Comic @-@ Con that it would not be Homer , although there is a scene that features Lisa worrying about Homer 's health as he struggles with a CPAP mask .

In July 2014 , when Jean announced the title of the episode at the Television Critics Association summer tour , several news outlets suspected that Krusty the Clown would be killed off . Jean later told of his surprise at this theory , saying " I was like , ' What ? In the dumps doesn 't mean you 're dead . It means you 're sad . ' I thought it was so obvious . I would be nuts to kill Krusty . Everybody loves that character " . He said of the episode , " It turned out bigger than we thought it was going to be . It 's not going to be this blood bath where they all get murdered . "

Jean confirmed that the possibility was open for Jackie Mason to reprise his role as Rabbi Krustofski in dreams or flashbacks , and that Krusty would become a more generous character in the knowledge that his father admired his work . After the episode " Simpsorama " later on in the season , which implied that Ralph Wiggum would die in 2017 , Jean told Entertainment Weekly that he had " learned [his] lesson " from the death of Rabbi Krustofski , therefore there would be no more deaths in the series , apart from Jean 's announcement that Sideshow Bob would kill Bart in a " Treehouse of Horror XXVI " segment in 2015 .

In addition to Mason , the episode guest starred Jeff Ross and Sarah Silverman as themselves roasting Krusty . Maurice LaMarche voiced a television critic and the late Jewish comedian Rodney Dangerfield , who played Larry Burns in " Burns , Baby Burns " . Kelsey Grammer reprised his role as Sideshow Bob in a scene showing him arguing with his replacement on Krusty 's show , Sideshow Mel . David Hyde Pierce , who had previously appeared as Bob 's brother Cecil , had a cameo as himself acting in the role of Felix in The Odd Couple .

The episode 's couch gag was the work of Academy Award @-@ nominated surrealist animator Don Hertzfeldt , who was recommended to the show by Mike B. Anderson . It depicts Homer using a time @-@ traveling remote control to regress to his original 1987 character model , then accidentally going into a distant future incarnation of the show called The Sampsons where he and his family have evolved into grotesque , mindless , catchphrase @-@ spouting mutants . Jean deemed it " crazier than we thought " and " the most insane one we 've ever done " .

= = Reception = =

The episode originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on September 28 , 2014 , as the premiere of the twenty @-@ sixth season of The Simpsons . It was watched by approximately 8 @.@ 53 million people during this broadcast . It received a 3 @.@ 9 Nielsen rating in the demographic for adults aged 18 ? 49 (up thirty @-@ four percent from the last season 's premiere) , and an eleven percent share . The Simpsons became the second highest @-@ rated program in the 18 ? 49 demographic on Fox that night , finishing with a higher rating than Brooklyn Nine @-@ Nine but a lower rating than the Family Guy episode " The Simpsons Guy " , a special hour @-@ long crossover episode with The Simpsons . The Simpsons was , however , the most @-@ watched show in the lineup in terms of total viewers .

The episode polarized critical opinions . Carey Bodenheimer of CNN wrote that

Instead of dropping the mic and resting on its collective laurels , [The Simpsons] kicked off season 26 with a staggering , Don Hertzfeldt directed intro sequence and then went on to prove that , in a world where shows can flame out after just a few episodes , ' The Simpsons ' , which premiered in 1989 still has plenty of jokes left in their comedic arsenal .

Time wrote " If ' Clown in the Dumps ' is not a classic on the level of season three 's ' Like Father , Like Clown ' , it was still a fitting , sweet conclusion to the story of Hyman and Herschel " . TV Fanatic gave the episode 4 out of 5 stars , writing " Simpsons Season 26 starts off with a bang , with plenty of laughs and even a few sentimental moments " . Tony Sokol of Den of Geek gave the episode 4 stars out of 5 , commenting

'Clown in the Dumps ' may not be considered a classic episode now , but after a few years when we watch it again on syndication , probably next year on FXX , it will grow in stature . It is a heartfelt episode that does bring on the laughs . The sadness of the episode to me was Jackie Mason 's voice , which sounds very tired .

Paste gave the episode a rating of 7 @. @ 1 , concluding

These days , The Simpsons can be hit or miss , and there was nothing to guarantee success from ' Clown in the Dumps ' . However , even if the character death was perfunctory , and Rabbi Krustofski has made only a handful of appearances in over 550 episodes , it was still a funny , solid half hour of television . Nothing special ? really , it was just another Krusty episode , and not the best Krusty episode . Nevertheless , the 26th season of The Simpsons has started out on somewhat of a high note . The good times keep on rolling for Matt Groening 's deathless creation .

The A.V. Club gave the episode a C , commenting " Fresh off a summer of Simpsonsmania , thanks to the phenomenally successful FXX marathon of every episode ever , The Simpsons returns for its 26th season with a nondescript , anti @-@ climactic premiere whose overstuffed cameos and would @-@ be big character death amount to little more than a dispiriting confirmation that its best days are , indeed , long gone . " IGN rated the episode 5 @. @ 8 , concluding " Between an anticlimactic death and a redundant conflict , The Simpsons didn 't start Season 26 off on the right foot " .

Executive producer Al Jean responded that the episode had been over @-@ hyped , and that a quote attributed to him he never made : he said that he was quoted as saying that an " iconic " character would die , when in actuality , he said a " beloved " character would die .