

= The Old Man and the Lisa =

" The Old Man and the Lisa " is the twenty @-@ first episode of The Simpsons ' eighth season . It first aired on the Fox network in the United States on April 20 , 1997 . In the episode , Mr. Burns becomes bankrupt and asks Lisa to help him become rich again . She helps him on the condition that he will lose his evil manners , and the two start making money recycling cans . After a while Mr. Burns has made enough money to start his own recycling plant . However , his true colors are revealed when Mr. Burns shows that , inside the plant , he makes a multi @-@ purpose edible compound made of squished sea life . He then sells the plant for US \$ 120 million and offers Lisa 10 % of his profits , but she declines .

The episode was directed by Mark Kirkland and written by John Swartzwelder . The writing staff had thought about an episode in which Mr. Burns would lose his money and would have to interact with the outside world . In DVD commentary the writers explained that while Mr. Burns tried to change he " couldn 't help being himself " . Professional wrestler Bret Hart made a cameo as himself , animated in his pink wrestling outfit . " The Old Man and the Lisa " contains cultural references to the television series That Girl and the film Invasion of the Body Snatchers . It was positively received by critics and won the Environmental Media Award for " TV Episodic Comedy " .

= = Plot = =

Mr. Burns speaks with the Springfield Elementary School " Junior Achievers Club " and after a conversation with Lisa , he realizes that he does not have nearly as much money as he thought he did . He decides to invest in the stock market to earn his money back . However , in doing so , he makes more questionable investments and becomes bankrupt . The bank forecloses on the plant and puts Lenny in charge , and sells Mr. Burns ' house to pro wrestler Bret Hart .

Mr. Burns moves in with Smithers and , wanting to be of use , decides to do Smithers ' grocery shopping . However , he is unfamiliar with grocery stores and becomes confused by the ketchup and catsup , causing the grocer to send Burns to the Springfield Retirement Castle . While at the home , Mr. Burns meets Lisa again , and begs her to help re @-@ build his empire . She eventually agrees on the condition that he drop his evil ways , and the two begin earning money through recycling .

Whilst at first he is confused at the practice Mr. Burns enthusiastically begins grabbing every can he can find , causing Lisa to believe that he has changed . Eventually , Burns earns so much money that he is able to open his own recycling plant . Burns gives Lisa its opening tour , showing her that it is environmentally sound and made of recycled materials . At first , Lisa is impressed , but then Burns shows her " the best part " . He has taken a cue from a demonstration Lisa had given him earlier , and attached millions of six @-@ pack holders together into a net which he uses to catch tons of sea life , in order to make " Li 'l Lisa 's Patented Animal Slurry " , a multi @-@ purpose edible compound . Lisa is horrified , proclaiming Burns not only still evil , but even more evil when he tries to be good , and begins running through the streets , helplessly trying to get the seemingly indoctrinated citizens to stop the recycling program she herself started .

Mr. Burns later visits Lisa and tells her that he sold the recycling plant for US \$ 120 million to a fish stick company , and that he has decided to give her , being his advisor , a 10 % share of the profits . Lisa refuses the money and rips up the cheque . This causes Homer to have four simultaneous heart attacks . While in the hospital , Lisa apologizes to Homer for not accepting the money . He tells her that he understands what she did , but says that the \$ 12 @,@ 000 would have been a big financial help . Lisa replies that 10 % of \$ 120 million is actually \$ 12 million . The hospital 's public address system announces a code blue , signifying that Homer has entered cardiac arrest .

= = Production = =

The episode was based on a story idea pitched by David X. Cohen , although it was written by John Swartzwelder , who had written many of the Simpsons episodes that have environmental themes . This habit led to him being called the " conscience of the staff " despite being a " self declared anti

@-@ environmentalist . " It was because of this that he was given such episodes , because the staff felt that he would give them just the right amount of sarcasm . In the original script for the episode , he described the recycling center as " a couple of hippies surrounded by garbage " . Two alternate original titles for the episode were Cohen 's " Lisa and Burns " and Swartzwelder 's " Burns Goes Broke " .

The writers had wanted an episode where Burns becomes bankrupt and shows what Burns would be like as a person in the real world . The idea with the recycling plant was that Burns did not have any sort of evil plan , he just could not help being himself . Burns really was trying to change and this was reflected in the end when he tried to give Lisa her share of the profits , with Lisa refusing . Burns was drawn without his trademark scowl for this episode . The staff joked about this being a suitable series finale , due to the episode ending with Homer suffering from another heart attack after Lisa tells Homer what 10 % of Burns ' \$ 120 @, @ 000 @, @ 000 check really is .

Professional wrestler Bret Hart guest starred in the episode as himself , and he was very insistent that he be shown wearing his pink wrestling outfit . He explained that " It 's so cool to be part of a show that makes people laugh really , really hard . " The media , aware that the animated Hart would want to purchase Mr. Burns ' home , mistakenly anticipated that " Bret offers to wrestle him [Mr. Burns] for the place . " Later , Hart moved on to do voice work on the animated television series Jacob Two @-@ Two . The press noted that at that time Hart was " no stranger to cartoon @-@ land , " having been " immortalized " by " The Old Man and the Lisa " .

= = Cultural references = =

Burns 's walk through the supermarket was based on a false rumor that George H. W. Bush visited a store and was confused by the scanner and , in the original draft for the episode , Burns met Bush while there . When bidding farewell to the hippie Mr. Burns says " Shine On You Crazy Diamond " a reference to Pink Floyd 's song of the same name . The hippie responds by saying that Burns needs to stop living in the past . The voice of the hippie is based on Dennis Hopper 's character in Apocalypse Now . " Achy Breaky Heart " , a song by Billy Ray Cyrus , is played at the old folks ' home . The scene where Mr. Burns chases Lisa through town is a spoof of the opening to the TV series That Girl . The scene where Lisa runs through the streets proclaiming recycling as evil spoofs the finales of Soylent Green and the original The Invasion of the Body Snatchers .

= = Reception = =

In its original broadcast , " The Old Man and the Lisa " finished 38th in ratings for the week of April 14 ? 20 , 1997 , with a Nielsen rating of 8 @. @ 3 , equivalent to approximately 8 @. @ 1 million viewing households . It was tied along with King of the Hill as the third highest @-@ rated show on the Fox network that week , following The X @-@ files and Melrose Place .

" The Old Man and the Lisa " received the 1997 Environmental Media Award in the " TV Episodic Comedy " category . Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood , the authors of the book I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide , called it " An odd episode with a not @-@ too @-@ unexpected outcome . The best bits are undoubtedly Burns learning his way around a supermarket and Lisa 's realisation of what Burns has been up to . "