

= Lisa 's Substitute =

" Lisa 's Substitute " is the nineteenth episode of The Simpsons ' second season . It originally aired on Fox in the United States on April 25 , 1991 . In the episode , Lisa 's teacher Miss Hoover takes medical leave due to what she thinks is Lyme disease , so substitute teacher Mr. Bergstrom takes over the class . Lisa finds Mr. Bergstrom 's teaching methods inspiring and discovers an entirely new love for learning . When Miss Hoover returns to class , Lisa is devastated to lose her most positive adult role model . Eventually , she realizes that while Mr. Bergstrom was one of a kind , she can find role models in other people , including her father Homer . Meanwhile , Bart runs for class president against Martin .

This is the first episode of the series that does not include a chalkboard gag in the opening titles . Jon Vitti wrote the episode and Rich Moore directed it . Dustin Hoffman ? using the pseudonym Sam Etic ? guest starred in it as Mr. Bergstrom , who was modeled on the physical appearance of Mike Reiss , a longtime writer and producer on the show . The episode features cultural references to Mike Nichols 's film The Graduate , which starred Hoffman , and the novel Charlotte 's Web by E. B. White . Since airing , the episode has received mostly positive reviews from television critics . It acquired a Nielsen Rating of 11 @. @ 1 , and was the highest @- @ rated show on the Fox network the week it aired .

= = Plot = =

Lisa 's teacher , Miss Hoover , thinks she has come down with Lyme disease and is replaced by substitute teacher Mr. Bergstrom . Because of his unorthodox teaching methods and friendly nature , Lisa starts falling in love with him .

Lisa runs into Mr. Bergstrom at a museum and is embarrassed when Homer displays his ignorance . Sensing a void in their relationship , Mr. Bergstrom takes Homer aside to suggest he be a more positive role model . After venting to her mother about Homer ruining her ' one chance ' to get to know Bergstrom outside of the classroom , Lisa is given permission to invite him to family dinner , only to be shattered when she finds Miss Hoover back and Mr. Bergstrom gone . She rushes to his apartment and learns that he has accepted employment in " Capital City " . She rushes to the train station to catch him , and confesses that she will be lost without him ; he replies and she sobbingly accepts that he has to go help the more needy . To comfort her , he writes her a note and tells her that any time she feels alone , its contents are all she needs to know . He then boards the train and departs . It reads , " You are Lisa Simpson " .

In a subplot , Bart 's class prepares to elect a class president . Mrs. Krabappel nominates Martin , while Sherri and Terri nominate Bart. During a debate with Martin , Bart tells jokes and wins the class over . Afterwards , certain of Bart 's inevitable victory thanks to his popular campaigning , none of the children in his class ? including himself ? actually voted , giving Martin the victory with just two votes : one from himself , and the other from Wendell Borton .

Devastated by Mr. Bergstrom 's departure , Lisa takes her grief out on the insensitive Homer , calling him a baboon . Marge tells Homer to console Lisa , explaining how her daughter is very hurt emotionally and is in need of her father . Homer enters Lisa 's room and finds her crying over her desk . He is uncertain of how to deal with Lisa 's sadness , and is uncomfortable seeing his daughter crying . Homer explains to Lisa how he cannot really understand how it feels to lose someone special : everyone he has ever loved and cared about lives with him still . He then alludes to Lisa calling him a baboon , and in a loving manner mimics a monkey , cheering her up . Lisa apologizes to Homer for calling him a baboon , and he accepts the apology . Finding Bart still seething over the election result , Homer cheers him up by reminding him that all the job of class president would have really meant was a lot of extra work with little reward , making Bart feel happy that he lost the election . Finally going by Maggie 's room , he places her pacifier in her mouth . Proud that he helped all three of his children , Homer goes to bed with Marge happily that night , stating he is " on the biggest roll " of his life .

= = Production = =

The episode was written by Jon Vitti and directed by Rich Moore . According to Vitti , The Simpsons producer James L. Brooks contributed more to this episode than he did to any other in the show 's history . Vitti said the episode was " very controversial " when it was being made because it " came at a point when the staff were just beginning to realize the comedy potential of the show , but we were trapped with these love stories , and just as the staff were starting to get frustrated with the love stories , along came ' Lisa 's Substitute ' : the biggest , huggiest , warmest and fuzziest of them all . "

Mr. Bergstrom was modeled on the physical appearance of Mike Reiss , a longtime writer and producer on the show . American actor Dustin Hoffman provided the voice of Mr. Bergstrom . Hoffman was not sure if he wanted to be identified with a cartoon show at the time , like many early guest stars on The Simpsons , and therefore used the pseudonym Sam Etic in the closing credits . Sam Etic is a play on the word semitic , alluding to the fact that both Hoffman and Mr. Bergstrom are Jewish . Brooks was the one who suggested the pseudonym , which Hoffman immediately liked . The cast of the show flew to New York to record the episode with Hoffman . Yeardley Smith , who provides the voice of Lisa , said she grew as an actress after working with Hoffman that day . The Simpsons writer Al Jean said he remembered that when the audio track of the episode came back , Hoffman 's voice was too low on the singing parts . The staff were " petrified " that the singing scenes would not show up on air , so they had Hoffman re @-@ record them when he was in Los Angeles . Vitti mentioned on Twitter that the note Lisa receives at the end of the episode should 've had an exclamation point at the end . He didn 't catch it in the animatic and it still " haunts [him] to this day " .

= = Cultural references = =

Mrs. Krabappel trying to seduce Mr. Bergstrom is a reference to Hoffman 's similar situation in the 1967 film The Graduate . Mr. Bergstrom reads a line from the 1952 novel Charlotte 's Web to his class . It is implied that this line is the end of the book , but in reality another chapter follows . Vitti said the line was the maximum amount of the book they could feature in the episode without being sued . The staff contacted a relative of the author E. B. White , but she would not clear the use of the book . When Lisa arrives at Mr. Bergstrom 's apartment building , a list of tenants can be seen . One of the names is J. Vitti , for the episode 's writer Jon Vitti , and another is J. Kamerman , for then @-@ animator Jen Kamerman . When Bart unexpectedly loses to Martin in the class president race , a picture of Martin holding up a copy of The Daily Fourth Gradian with the headline " Simpson Defeats Prince " is taken , which in turn ends up on the front page of The Daily Fourth Gradian under the headline " Prince Beats Simpson " . This is a reference to the famous picture of former President Harry Truman holding up a copy of a prematurely printed edition of the Chicago Tribune that proclaimed " Dewey Defeats Truman " , taken the day after his close victory over Thomas E. Dewey in the 1948 United States presidential election .

= = Reception = =

In its original broadcast , " Lisa 's Substitute " finished forty @-@ third in the ratings for the week of April 22 ? 28 , 1991 , with a Nielsen Rating of 11 @.@ 1 , equivalent to approximately ten million viewing households . It was the highest @-@ rated show on the Fox network that week . Hoffman has been praised for his guest appearance as Mr. Bergstrom . Entertainment Weekly named it one of the sixteen greatest guest appearances on The Simpsons . In 2007 , Simon Crerar of The Times listed his performance as one of the thirty @-@ three funniest cameos in the history of the show .

Since airing , the episode has received mostly positive 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 said , " Despite a scene @-@ stealing performance from Ms Krabappel , this is Lisa 's show . Mr Bergstrom 's last message for Lisa is a delightful touch and adds the

finishing touch to a wonderful episode . " Former TV Squad blogger Adam Finley named " Lisa 's Substitute " as one of his top fourteen most touching The Simpsons episodes , and The Simpsons Archive webmaster Jouni Paakkinen rated the episode as his third favorite . Colin Jacobson of DVD Movie Guide said that Lisa episodes " tend to be goopy " , but " Lisa 's Substitute " seemed like " a good show , however " . He went on to say , " The show offered many other good moments , and it helped expand the Lisa / Homer relationship neatly . The Bart ? s election subplot punctured any sappiness that otherwise might have occurred . [...] ' Lisa 's Substitute ' offered a fairly solid program . " The episode 's reference to The Graduate was named the 20th greatest film reference in the history of the show by Total Film 's Nathan Ditum . Ditum also ranked Hoffman 's performance as the 16th best guest appearance in the show 's history . Todd VanDerWerff of Slant Magazine picked the episode as the show 's second best , praising its emotion and Hoffman 's performance .

" Lisa 's Substitute " also received positive reviews from cast and crew members of the show . Bart 's voice actress , Nancy Cartwright , said it is one of her top three episodes together with " Bart Sells His Soul " and " Bart the Mother " , while writer Al Jean said the episode was his favorite sentimental episode . Dan Castellaneta , the voice of Homer , named it his favorite episode of the show together with " Simpson and Delilah " and " Homer the Heretic " . Executive producer James L. Brooks said he thinks " Lisa 's Substitute " stands out because it is The Simpsons ' " best show " with a message behind it .