

= Blood Feud (The Simpsons) =

" Blood Feud " is the twenty @-@ second and final episode of The Simpsons ' second season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on July 11 , 1991 . In the episode , Mr. Burns falls ill and desperately needs a blood transfusion . Homer discovers Bart has Burns ' rare blood type and urges his son to donate some , promising that they will be handsomely rewarded . However , after receiving the blood , all Burns does is send the family a card . Enraged , Homer writes an insulting reply , but Marge convinces him at the last minute not to send it , although Bart mails it anyway .

The episode was written by George Meyer and directed by David Silverman . Executive producer Sam Simon and writers Al Jean and Mike Reiss came up with the idea for the episode . A co @-@ worker had recently needed a blood transfusion and the writers thought it would be funny if Mr. Burns had one . Although Meyer was credited with writing the episode , Jean and Reiss re @-@ wrote and polished the script . The episode includes the debut of the Olmec head Xtapolapocetl , which would become a common background prop in the Simpson home .

" Blood Feud " was part of the season two production run , but was completed behind schedule . It was originally broadcast on July 11 , 1991 as part of " premiere week " , the Fox Network 's attempt to expand the normal 30 week prime time season and gain new viewers for the fall . In its original broadcast , the episode finished 24th in ratings for the week with a Nielsen rating of 10 @.@ 8 .

= = Plot = =

Mr. Burns falls ill with hypohemia (a fictional condition in which the body naturally runs out of blood , though it is akin to a real condition called hypovolemia) and needs a blood transfusion . His blood type , double O negative , is very rare , however , and none of the employees at Springfield Nuclear Power Plant have it . Homer discovers that Bart has double O negative blood and urges his son to donate , promising that he will be handsomely rewarded . Bart reluctantly agrees and his blood donation saves Mr. Burns ' life . Burns is rejuvenated by the blood and he sends the Simpson family a thank you card . Enraged at Burns ' paltry gesture , Homer writes an insulting reply , but Marge convinces him at the last minute not to send it . The next morning , Homer discovers that the letter is gone as Bart has mailed it .

Bart explains that he knew Homer would probably change his mind , and decided to send the letter before that could happen . Homer desperately tries to prevent the letter from reaching Burns , but fails . Mr. Burns becomes furious and demands that Homer be beaten . However , Mr. Smithers calls off the beating on the grounds that that is no way to thank the man who saved Mr. Burns 's life . Smithers convinces Burns to instead reward the Simpson family . The Simpsons receive an antique Xtapolapocetl , an Olmec head (a massive , Tiki @-@ god @-@ like affair) that Bart , the blood donor , likes , and which Homer hates .

At the end , as the family stare at the head , the Simpsons debate on what the moral of this whole story is . It cannot be ' A good deed is its own reward ' as Bart got a reward he likes , but at the same time it is not ' No good deed goes unrewarded ' as they never would have received anything if Homer had not written the angry letter . Homer decides that there is not a lesson to be learned from this , as it 's " just a bunch of stuff that happened " .

= = Production = =

" Blood Feud " was written by George Meyer and directed by David Silverman . Executive producer Sam Simon and writers Al Jean and Mike Reiss came up with the idea for the episode while they were trying to fill up the rest of the production run . A co @-@ worker had recently needed a blood transfusion , and the writers thought it would be funny if Mr. Burns had one . Although Meyer was credited with writing the episode , Jean and Reiss re @-@ wrote and polished the script . Harry Shearer , the voice of Mr. Burns and Smithers , could not attend the table read for the episode , so his parts were read by Dan Castellaneta (the voice of Homer) . " Blood Feud " includes a first act

that is much longer than a normal episode of the show . The producers were going to end the act with Mr. Burns feeling better , but decided to extend it to show how the Simpson family was affected . " Blood Feud " ends with the family discussing what the message of the episode was , but decide that there was no message . The writers were having trouble conceiving an ending , but decided that since there was no point , they would discuss it . In his book Planet Simpson , Chris Turner writes that the ending is meant to openly mock the " notion of the tidy sitcom @-@ style moral " and the " formulaic plots of sitcoms " .

David Silverman describes the episode as " one of my very favorite episodes that I had the pleasure to direct " . He notes that several " standard Homerisms " appear for the first time in the episode , such as Homer 's conversations with his brain and his high @-@ pitched " fairy voice " . Silverman inserted a red herring into the episode in a scene where Mr. Burns says that he was rejuvenated . Silverman used a close @-@ up of Burns when he says " blood of a young boy " in hopes of misleading viewers into thinking that the rest of episode would be about Burns seeking more of Bart 's blood .

The episode includes the debut of the Olmec head Xtapolapocetl . After the episode , it was moved into the Simpsons ' basement , where it has since reappeared as a prop in the background of several episodes , although never in a major role . The design was partially based on real Olmec heads , but changed to look more interesting and grotesque .

= = Cultural references = =

The composition and setting of the scene where Smithers and Dr. Hibbert discuss Mr. Burns ' health is partially inspired by a scene from Citizen Kane where Kane talks to his wife Susan Alexander after she attempts suicide . Otto is heard humming " Iron Man " by Black Sabbath . The ghostwriter Mr. Burns hires mentions that he wrote " Like Hell I Can 't " . The title is a play on Sammy Davis , Jr . ' s autobiography Yes , I Can . Homer mistells the story of " Androcles and the Lion " , instead referring to it as " Hercules and the Lion " . A mural in the post office resembles Michelangelo 's The Creation of Adam . Burns 's line about getting " A frabulous , grabulous , zip @-@ zoop @-@ zabulous present " is similar to lines used in Dr. Seuss books . The scene where Homer dictates the angry letter to Mr. Burns , and the scene where he and Bart attempt to get it out of the mailbox , are inspired by the Honeymooners episode " Letter to the Boss " .

= = First broadcast = =

" Blood Feud " was part of the season two production run , but was completed behind schedule . It was originally broadcast on July 11 , 1991 as part of the Fox Network 's " premiere week " . Fox aired new episodes of several of its top shows , including The Simpsons and Beverly Hills , 90210 , in hopes of expanding the normal 30 week prime time season and gaining new viewers for the fall . Although " Three Men and a Comic Book " was the official season two finale , " Blood Feud " is considered part of the second season and was included in The Complete Second Season DVD boxset .

In its original broadcast , " Blood Feud " finished 24th in ratings for the week of July 8 ? 14 , 1991 , with a Nielsen rating of 10 @.@ 8 . It was the second highest rated program on Fox after Beverly Hills , 90210 . The episode beat a rerun of The Cosby Show , which aired at the same time on NBC , which had a Nielsen Rating of 10 @.@ 3 . Fox finished second overall on July 11 , with an average rating of 10 @.@ 4 .

= = Reception = =

The episode has received 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 , wrote , " One of those shows that people always talk about when discussing The Simpsons ? and rightfully so . Homer 's transformation from angry parent to sensible , calm husband is

excellent , as is his reaction to Bart posting his angry letter . Their attempts to retrieve the letter and Burns ' eventual reaction are fabulous . " DVD Movie Guide 's Colin Jacobson wrote : " In many ways , " Feud " seemed more derivative than usual . Not only did it resemble parts of " Two Cars in Every Garage and Three Eyes on Every Fish " , but Homer ? s attempts to regain the letter before Burns reads it appear reminiscent of an episode of The Flintstones . Despite those similarities , " Feud " still provided a very entertaining show . The program packed in a slew of hilarious moments , from Homer ? s description of a Bible story to his visit to the post office . " A reviewer for DVDTown gave the episode a grade of C , describing it as " a fun episode , but far from great . " Ben Rayner of The Toronto Star included " Blood Feud " in his list of the top ten episodes of The Simpsons , noting that " Homer 's efforts to thwart the mail service still kill me 15 years later . "