

= Bart the Daredevil =

" Bart the Daredevil " is the eighth episode of The Simpsons ' second season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on December 6 , 1990 . It was written by Jay Kogen and Wallace Wolodarsky and directed by Wes Archer . In the episode , the Simpsons go to a Monster truck rally that features famous daredevil Lance Murdock . Bart immediately becomes enamored and decides that he wants to become a daredevil as well . Bart 's first stunt ends in injury , and despite the family and Dr. Hibbert 's best efforts , he continues to attempt stunts .

Bart decides to jump the Springfield gorge , but Homer learns about Bart 's plan and makes him promise not to jump it . However , Bart breaks his promise and goes to jump the gorge . Before the act , though , Homer stops him just in time and gets Bart to swear that he will stop being a daredevil .

Series creator Matt Groening said that the episode is his favorite of the series , and it is also considered among the series ' best by television critics .

= = Plot = =

The Simpsons family attends a monster truck rally featuring Truck @-@ o @-@ Saurus , a giant robotic dinosaur which ultimately crushes the Simpson family car . The rally 's grand finale features a death @-@ defying stunt by " the world 's greatest daredevil " , Lance Murdock . Despite the fact that the act leaves Murdock badly hurt and hospital @-@ bound , Bart is enamored by his performance and dreams of becoming a daredevil . Bart quickly injures himself during his first skateboard stunt by trying to jump over the family car . At the hospital , Dr. Hibbert shows Bart a ward full of children who have been hurt from attempting stunts . Nonetheless , Bart is persistent and continues to pursue his daredevil interest by jumping over a swimming pool and Homer on his hammock . On a class trip to Springfield Gorge , Bart announces that on Saturday , he will jump the gorge on his skateboard . Lisa talks Bart into visiting the hospital to see Murdock , hoping that the daredevil will talk him out of the dangerous stunt . Unexpectedly , however , Murdock encourages Bart to continue on his legacy . Bart plans to do it against the wishes of Homer , who insists that it is too dangerous .

Even after a punishment , several orders , and a " heart @-@ to @-@ heart talk " with Homer , Bart still goes to the gorge and tries to jump it . He is stopped at the last second by Homer , who decides to jump the gorge himself to show Bart what it is like to see a family member needlessly risk their life for no good reason . Bart , not wanting to see his father injured on his account , promises to never jump the gorge and never try to be a daredevil again . However , when Homer goes to hug Bart to make up their misunderstanding , the board rolls down a hill and flies over the gorge , with Homer on board . Although it briefly appears as though Homer will make it safely across , he loses momentum near the middle and plummets to the bottom , progressively becoming severely injured with each fall towards the jagged rocks , and receiving multiple fractures and wounds . A helicopter winches Homer out , slamming his head against the side of the gorge several times in the process before he is loaded into a waiting ambulance , which immediately crashes into a tree as it starts to leave for the hospital . The gurney carrying Homer rolls out of the back , and Homer once again falls to the floor of the canyon . Having arrived at the hospital he is put in the same ward next to Lance Murdock , where he tells him , " You think you 've got guts ? Try raising my kids ! "

= = Production = =

The episode was written by Jay Kogen and Wallace Wolodarsky and directed by Wes Archer . The character Lance Murdoch was based on Evel Knievel , an American motorcycle daredevil and entertainer famous in the United States and elsewhere between the late 1960s and early 1980s . Kogen , Wolodarsky , and many other members of the Simpsons ' staff were fans of Knievel 's stunts , and Wolodarsky named " Bart the Daredevil " as his favorite episode among the episodes that he wrote for The Simpsons , because it is " near and dear to [ his ] heart " .

Dr. Hibbert makes his first appearance on the series in the episode . In Kogen and Wolodarsky 's original script for " Bart the Daredevil " , Hibbert was a woman named Julia Hibbert , who they named after comedic actress Julia Sweeney ( Hibbert was her last name , through marriage , at the time ) . When the Fox network moved The Simpsons to prime time on Thursdays to compete against the National Broadcasting Company 's ( NBC ) top @-@ rated The Cosby Show , the writing staff instead decided to make Hibbert a parody of Bill Cosby 's character Dr. Cliff Huxtable .

The episode has been referenced in numerous clip shows and flashback episodes throughout the series . In particular , the scene of Homer plummeting down Springfield Gorge has become one of the most used The Simpsons clips . In the scene , Homer falls down the cliff on the skateboard , bouncing off the cliff walls and finally landing at the bottom , where the skateboard lands on his head . After being loaded into an ambulance at the top of the cliff , the ambulance crashes into a tree , and the gurney rolls out , causing Homer to fall down the cliff again .

In the season thirteen episode " The Blunder Years " , when the family is trying to find out why Homer cannot stop screaming after he is hypnotized , Homer flashes back to his greatest moment : jumping the Springfield Gorge , only to be interrupted by Lisa saying " Everyone 's sick of that memory , " referring to the fact that the scene has been referenced so many times .

The scene was first featured outside of " Bart the Daredevil " in the season four episode " So It 's Come to This : A Simpsons Clip Show " . When the clip is shown in that episode , additional footage is seen of Homer bouncing down the cliff the second time , and after he lands at the bottom , the gurney lands on his head . Contrary to popular belief , the second fall down the gorge ( ending with Homer getting hit by the gurney ) was not a deleted scene from " Bart the Daredevil " , but rather a scene animated exclusively for " So It 's Come to This : A Simpsons Clip Show " .

The scene is also referenced in the season fourteen episode " Treehouse of Horror XIII " , in which a large number of Homer 's clones created in the episode fall down the gorge . " Bart the Daredevil " was once again referenced in The Simpsons Movie when Bart and Homer jump over Springfield Gorge on a motorcycle , and when they land on the other side , the ambulance from this episode can be seen in the background ( still smashed against the tree ) .

= = Cultural references = =

At the beginning of the episode , Lisa , Bart and Bart 's friends watch professional wrestling . The Russian wrestler in the ring , Rasputin , is named after mystic Grigori Rasputin . The monster truck at the rally , Truck @-@ o @-@ saurus , is a parody of the Robosaurus monster truck . In the hospital , Dr. Hibbert shows Bart a patient that tried to fly like Superman , and he also mentions the " three stooges " ward . Lance Murdoch is a parody of famous daredevils such as Evel Knievel and Matt Murdock , the alter ego of the Marvel Comics superhero Daredevil . Bart 's attempt to jump over Springfield Gorge is a reference to Knievel 's 1974 attempt to jump Snake River Canyon at Twin Falls , Idaho , with a Skycycle X @-@ 2 . Bart appearing at Springfield Gorge in the distance is based on Omar Sharif 's entrance in Lawrence of Arabia .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast , " Bart the Daredevil " finished 20th in Nielsen ratings for the week of December 3 ? 9 , 1990 , making The Simpsons the highest @-@ rated television series on the Fox television network that week . To promote The Simpsons Sing the Blues , the music video for the album 's lead single , " Do the Bartman " , premiered shortly after this episode 's first broadcast . In an interview conducted by Entertainment Weekly in 2000 celebrating the show 's tenth anniversary , Groening named " Bart the Daredevil " his favorite episode of the series , and chose the scene in which Homer is loaded into an ambulance and then falls out of it as the funniest moment in the series .

Since airing , the episode has received positive reviews from critics . Michael Moran of The Times ranked it as the third best in the show 's history . DVD Movie Guide 's Colin Jacobson enjoyed the episode , and referred to its opening by claiming that " any episode that starts with the brilliance that

is Truckasaurus has to be good . " He liked the decent morals explored in the episode , and called the conclusion a " great one " , making it a " consistently fine episode " . Jeremy Kleinman of DVD Talk considered " Bart the Daredevil " one of his favorite episodes of the season . He found the daredevil scenes to be funny , but also appreciated the episode 's scenes with " true heart " . Kleinman concluded by noting that the episode helps The Simpsons stand apart from other animated and live action sitcoms by focusing more on the relationships between the characters than " just a humorous weekly plotline " . Writing for the book I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide , Jay Kogen and Wallace Wolodarsky noted that " Bart the Daredevil " ' s sequence in which Homer falls down the gorge is the one that " everyone remembers " , noting that " he 's getting much stupider by this point . " In his book Doug Pratt 's DVD , DVD reviewer and Rolling Stone contributor Doug Pratt chooses the episode as one of the funniest of the series .