

= The Telltale Head =

" The Telltale Head " is the eighth episode of The Simpsons ' first season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on February 25 , 1990 . It was written by Al Jean , Mike Reiss , Sam Simon and Matt Groening , and directed by Rich Moore . In the episode , Bart cuts the head off the statue of Jebediah Springfield in the center of town to impress Jimbo , Kearney and Dolph , three older kids he admires . The town 's residents , including the three boys , are horrified and Bart regrets his actions . After telling his family , Homer and Bart head to the center of town , where they are met by an angry mob . After Bart tells the mob he has made a mistake , the townspeople forgive Bart and he places the head back on the statue . The episode 's title is a reference to the short story " The Tell @-@ Tale Heart " by Edgar Allan Poe .

= = Plot = =

The episode begins in medias res : Homer and Bart are chased through the streets of Springfield by an angry mob while carrying the head of the statue of their town founder , Jebediah Springfield . Surrounded by the mob , Bart begins to relate the events of the previous day .

Bart suffers through a boring morning at church and is forbidden by Marge to see the violent new Space Mutants movie . After church , he runs into a local gang Jimbo , Dolph , and Kearney . The three invite Bart to sneak into the Space Mutants movie with them .

After being thrown out of the movie by the manager , the gang shoplifts from the Kwik @-@ E @-@ Mart , throw rocks at the Jebediah Springfield statue , and watch clouds . Bart remarks that one cloud resembles Jebediah Springfield , but without a head . His new friends remark that they wish someone would decapitate the statue , saying it would be funny to see the town so upset . When Bart disagrees , the bullies make fun of him which upsets Bart. Bart is conflicted and asks Homer whether it is okay to compromise your beliefs to be popular . Homer tells Bart that popularity is the most important thing in the world , as long as Bart is not talking about killing someone . That night , Bart sneaks out of the house and decapitates the statue .

The town is shaken by the crime , which causes Bart to feel guilty about his actions . Adding to his guilt is when Jimbo , Dolph , and Kearney are upset as well , telling Bart that if they met the person responsible , they would attack him critically , as they did not actually mean what they said about the statue before . Bart begins to fear of the consequences he would face if his actions are to be revealed , and his conscience manifests itself as the statue 's severed head , which begins speaking to him . Unable to go on , Bart finally confesses his crime to his family , explaining that he thought that being popular was the most important thing in the world that Homer told him . It was then Homer realized that he inspired Bart of his popularity advice that caused him to commit the crime in the first place , and feels extremely guilty of doing so . It was then Bart decided to return the head back where it belongs , and Homer follows along , holding himself responsible for the events . They are found by the angry mob , returning the story to the beginning . Bart tells the mob that his act has actually brought the town closer together , to which the mob agrees . The head is returned to the statue and everyone forgives Homer and Bart for their actions . Homer and Bart then leave peacefully , with the former reminding the latter that " not all lynch mobs are this nice . "

= = Production = =

The idea to have the episode in flashbacks was originally thought up in the color screening stage of production . This is the first episode directed by Rich Moore . This is the first time Jebediah Springfield is mentioned , as well as the first time the Simpsons go to church . The announcer of the football game Homer is listening to at church is based on Keith Jackson .

This is the first episode of the series in which Sideshow Bob , Reverend Timothy Lovejoy , Krusty the Clown , Jimbo Jones , Kearney Zyzwicz , Dolph Starbeam , Ms. Albright , and Apu Nahasapeemapetilon appear .

= = Cultural references = =

Bart awakening and finding the head of Jebediah Springfield in bed next to him is a reference to the scene in The Godfather where Jack Woltz finds the head of his prize racehorse next to him one morning .

= = Reception = =

In its original broadcast , " The Telltale Head " finished twenty @-@ sixth in ratings for the week of February 19 ? 25 , 1990 , with a Nielsen rating of 15 @.@ 2 , equivalent to approximately 14 @.@ 0 million viewing households . It was the second highest @-@ rated show on the Fox network that week , following Married ... with Children . Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood said they enjoyed : " the Simpsons [being] grossly dysfunctional in church , Homer dispensing terrible advice , and a real moral dilemma for Bart. " In a DVD review of the first season , David B. Grelck gave the episode a rating of 3 / 5 and added , " This is a strange episode , touching on many bizarre aspects of the show to come . " Colin Jacobson of DVD Movie Guide said , " Good little moments abounded , and this was a generally solid episode . I liked the objects the boys saw in the clouds , and quite a few other funny bits appeared . ? Telltale ? wasn ? t a great episode , but it was generally entertaining and clever . "