

## = The Secret War of Lisa Simpson =

" The Secret War of Lisa Simpson " is the twenty @-@ fifth and final episode of The Simpsons ' eighth season . It first aired on the Fox network in the United States on May 18 , 1997 . Bart gets sent to a military academy as punishment for bad behavior . While visiting the academy , Lisa sees that the school is far more challenging than hers and she decides that she wants to attend as well . It was directed by Mike B. Anderson , written by Richard Appel and featured Willem Dafoe in a guest spot as the school 's commandant .

## = = Plot = =

After a day watching mind @-@ numbing videos in class , Lisa becomes concerned that her education is not challenging enough . Meanwhile , Bart 's class visits the Springfield Police Department , where Bart finds a room with several megaphones . After placing them end to end and increasing their amplification , he inadvertently creates a sonic shockwave that shatters all the glass in Springfield . Chief Wiggum suggests sending Bart to military school to correct his behavior . When the family visit the school , Lisa is impressed by the challenging curriculum and decides to attend with Bart.

Lisa stirs discontent among the students , as she is the first female student and gets her own barracks . She and Bart are subjected to hazing ; Bart is eventually accepted and distances himself from his sister . Lonely , Lisa considers going home , but decides to see it through . As the school year comes to a close , the Commandant reveals the final test for the students : the " Eliminator " , a hand @-@ over @-@ hand crawl across a rope suspended high above thorn bushes . Lisa fears she will not be able to complete the task , but Bart helps her train in secret .

On the day of the test , Lisa is the last to cross the Eliminator . She is about to fall and the students jeer , but Bart cheers her on and she makes it across safely . The other students vow to make the rest of the semester a living hell for him , but realize they graduate in three hours . The Commandant awards Lisa a special medal " For Satisfactory Completion of the Second Grade " .

## = = Production = =

The episode was written by Richard Appel , but the idea of Bart and Lisa attending a military academy had previously been pitched , and had been floating around since 1991 . The idea had not yet been used as an episode plot , because the writers had not felt comfortable with taking Bart and Lisa to a strange place early in the series .

During the scene where the Commandant is talking , there is a brief shot of Lisa blinking . As there had been an error in the final print of the episode , the shot was animated , painted and shot on May 16 , 1997 , the Friday before the episode 's airdate . The spiky blond @-@ haired boy , who runs towards the Eliminator while screaming , is a caricature of director Mike B. Anderson .

## = = Reception = =

The episode originally aired on May 18 , 1997 , as the season finale , along with a rerun of " The Springfield Files . " The episode was mistakenly anticipated by some as being about Lisa launching " a legal battle " to enroll at the military school . In its original broadcast , " The Secret War of Lisa Simpson " finished 47th in ratings for the week of May 12 ? 18 , 1997 , with a Nielsen rating of 8 @.@ 3 , equivalent to approximately 8 @.@ 1 million viewing households . It was the second highest @-@ rated show on the Fox network that week , following The X @-@ Files .

Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood , the authors of the book I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide , disliked the episode , writing that it was " very dull " and that Dafoe was not used well . However , Dafoe is one of show runner Josh Weinstein 's favorite guest stars . Ian Johnson argued Dafoe 's casting was " rare " and " somewhat offbeat " .

Journalist Raju Mudhar also wrote that in this episode , " The Simpsons have succinctly laid out our

eventual future . " This referred to the rise of robots in the real world and the quote from this episode :

" The wars of the future will not be fought on the battlefield or at sea . They will be fought in space , or possibly on top of a very tall mountain . In either case , most of the actual fighting will be done by small robots . And as you go forth today remember always your duty is clear : To build and maintain those robots . "

= = Merchandise = =

The episode was one of four in 1999 released on a VHS ( Re @-@ released on DVD in 2005 ) called Bart Wars focused on crosses between The Simpsons and Star Wars . However , one critic wrote that with this episode and " Marge Be Not Proud " and " Dog of Death , " both of which are also on the DVD , the " Star Wars connection " is " tangential at best . " The other episode was " Mayored to the Mob . "