





NOT TO EAT THOSE COOKIES IN THE COOKIE JAR.



THEY WEREN'T BOW TIES, THEY WERE HOURGLASSES. I BAKED THEM FOR PATTY AND SELMA'S BIOLOGICAL CLOCKWATCHERS ANONYMOUS MEETING TONIGHT.





ONLY ONE DONUT --IT'S NOT FAIR!

> C'MON, MAN! GET A GRIP ON YOURSELF! YOU CAN DO IT. THE TRICK IS NOT TO THINK ABOUT DONUTS!



BUT EVERYTHING REMINDS ME OF DONUTS. THAT CLOUD EVEN LOOKS LIKE A GREAT BIG DONUT!



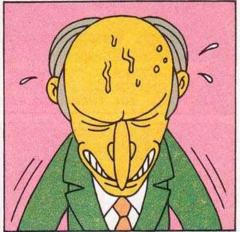
AND THAT CLOUD LOOKS LIKE A BUNCH

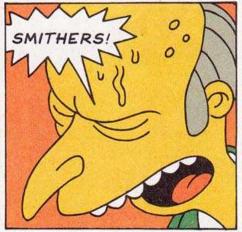






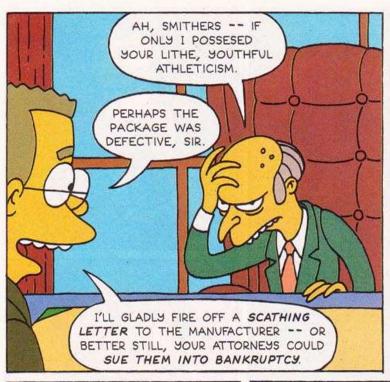


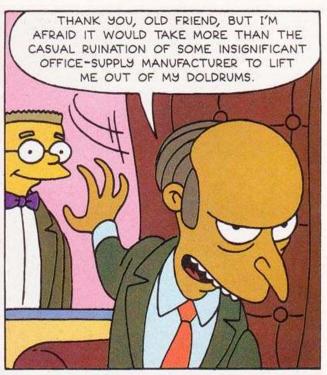


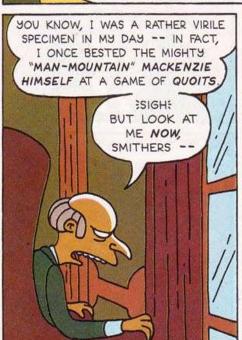


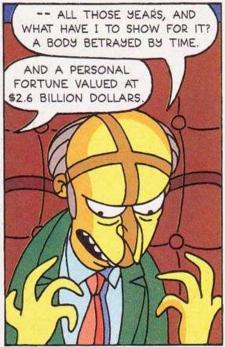


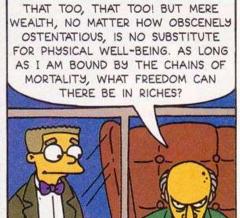


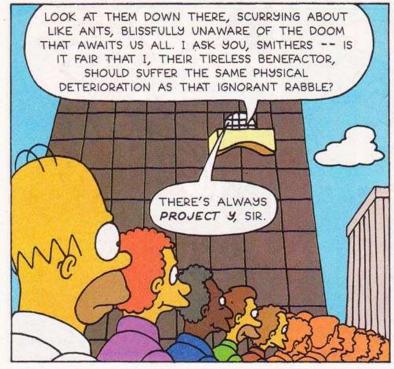












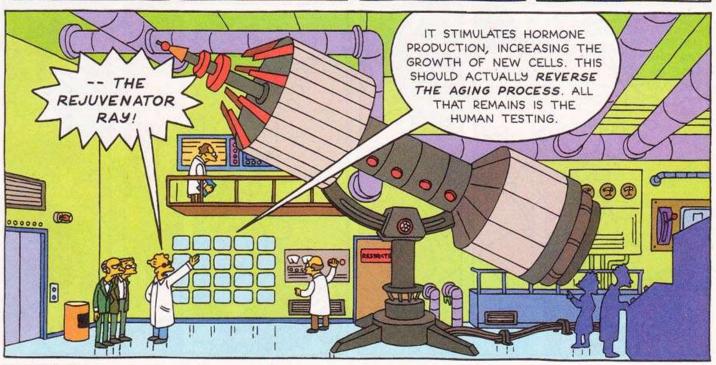


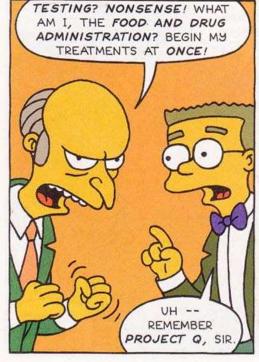










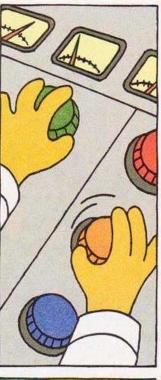


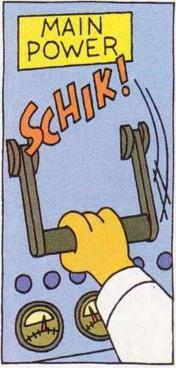




THE RAY.

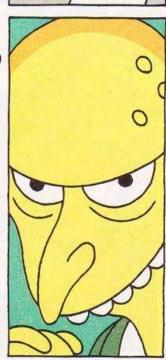




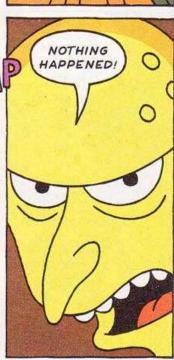


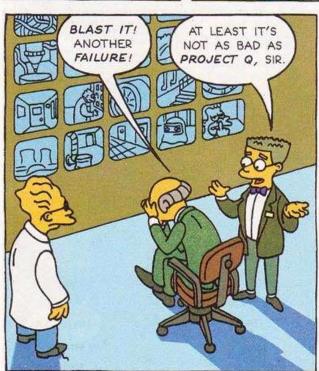


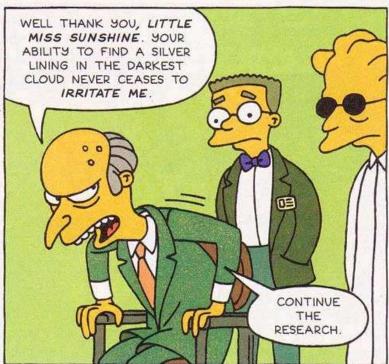




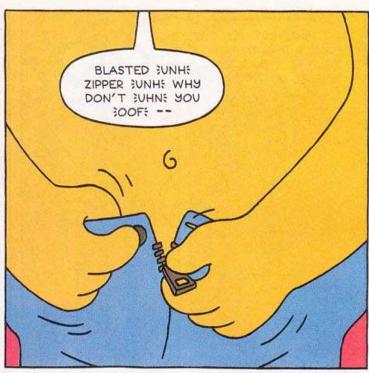




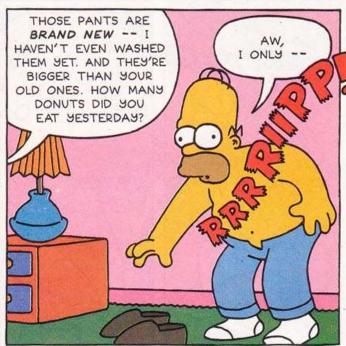












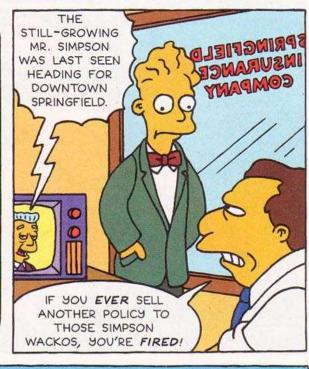






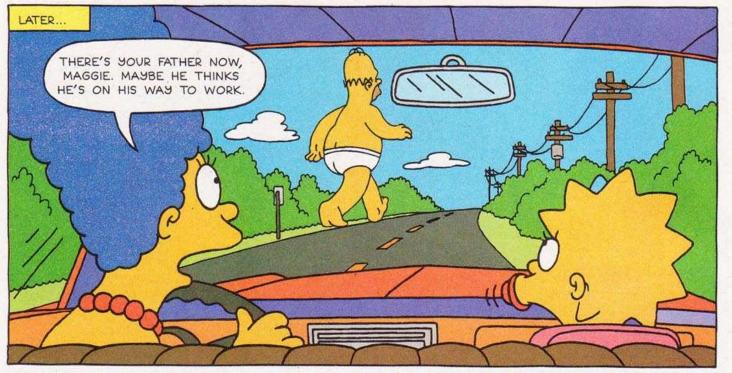














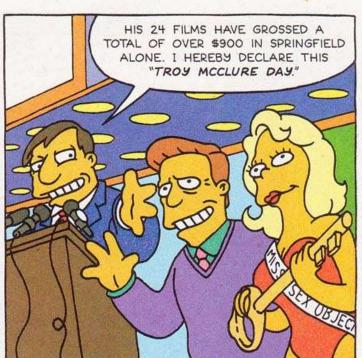


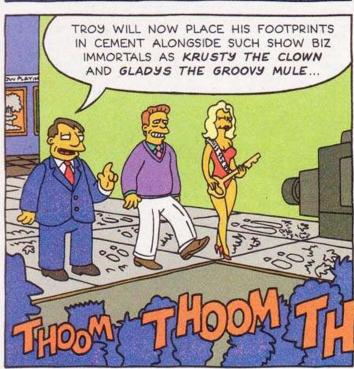






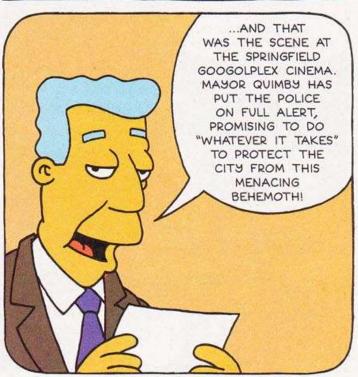


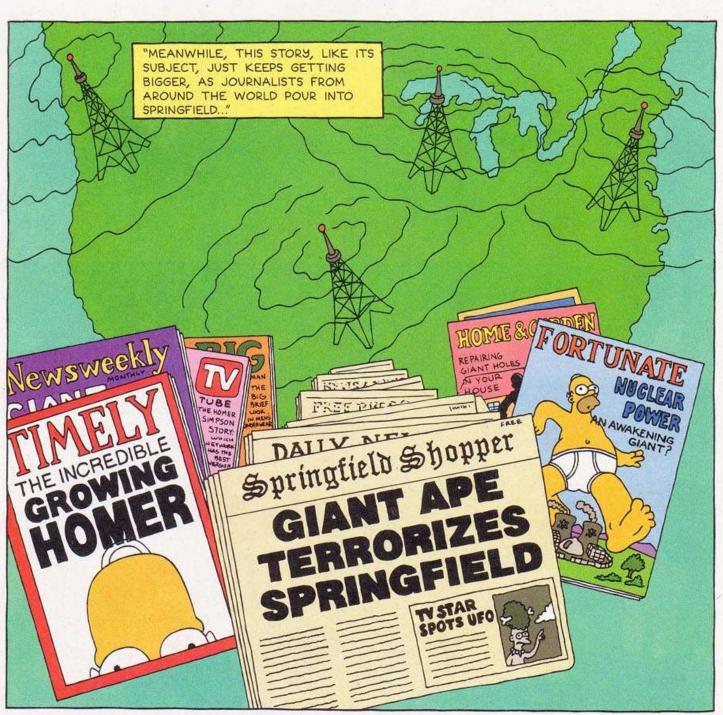


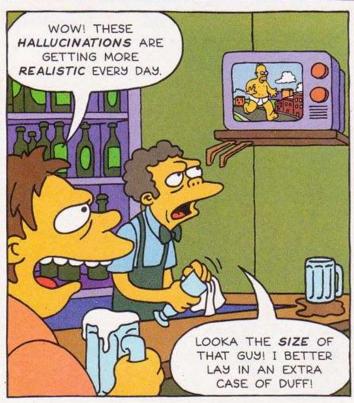




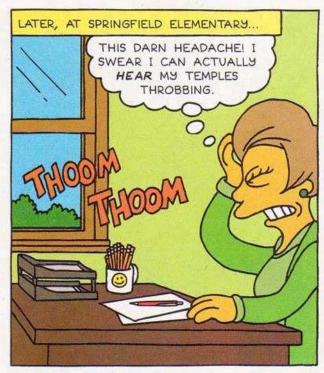






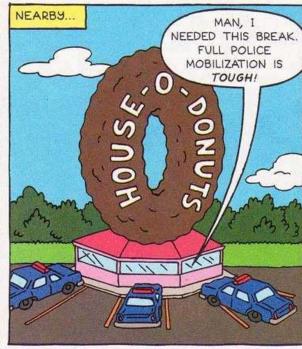








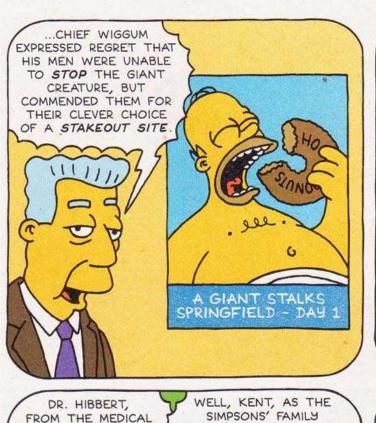




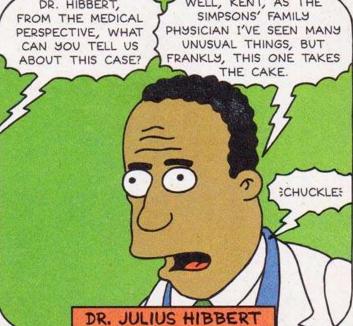




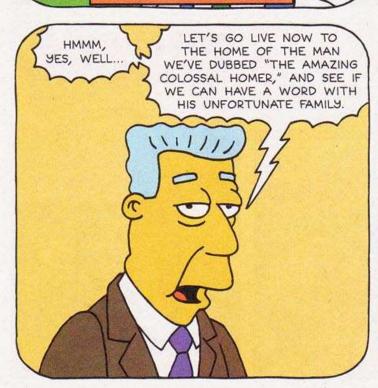














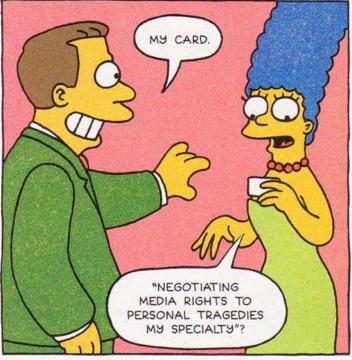


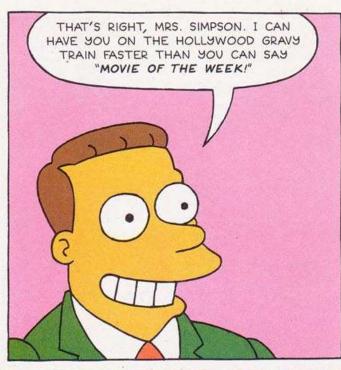








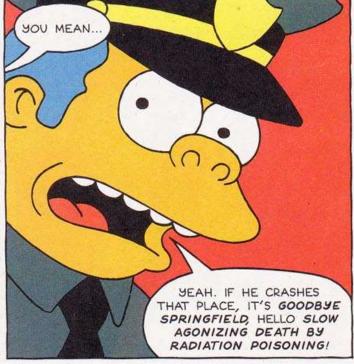




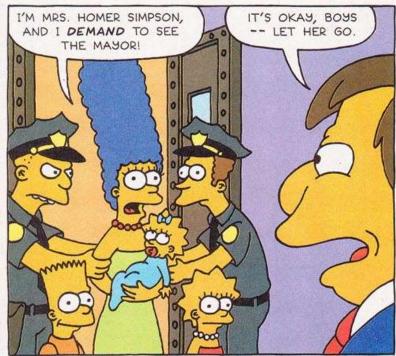












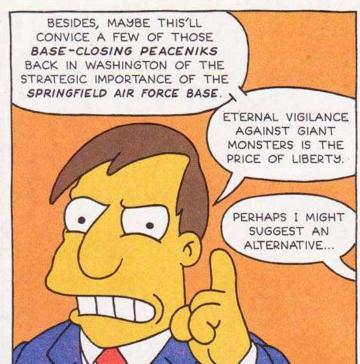


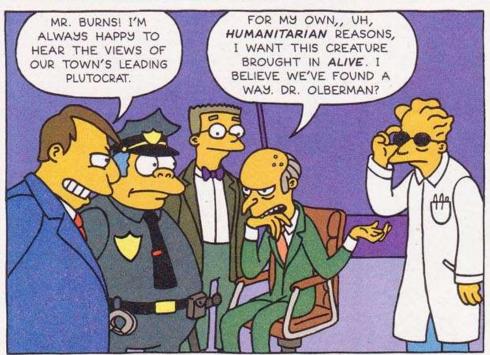










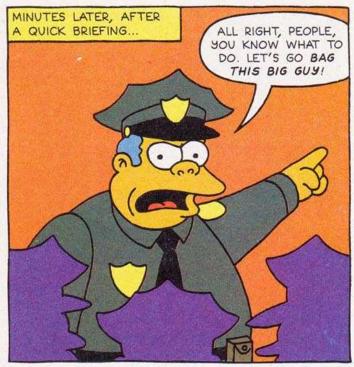














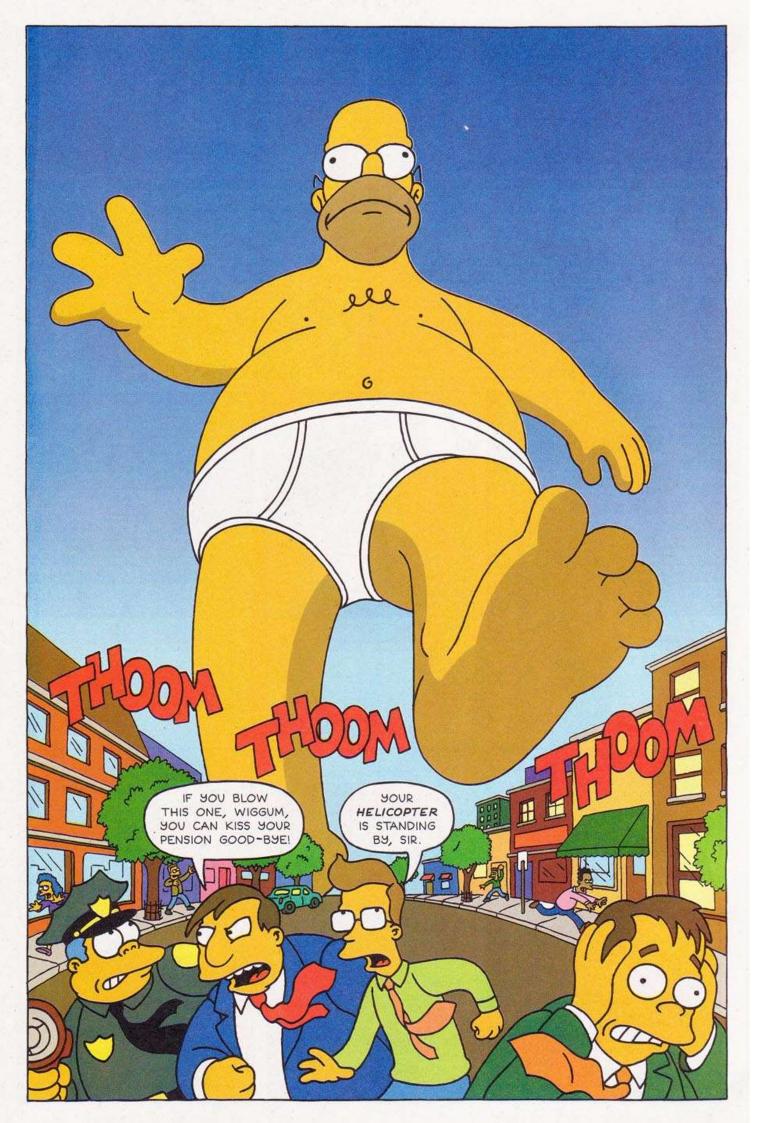


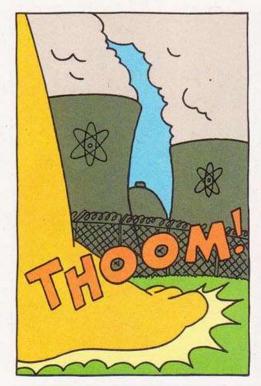




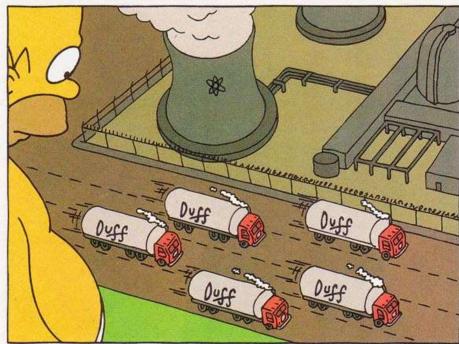






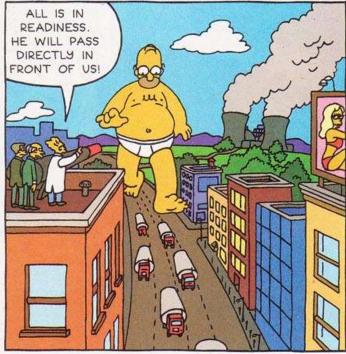






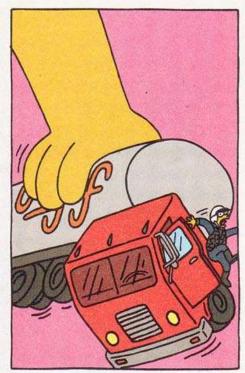




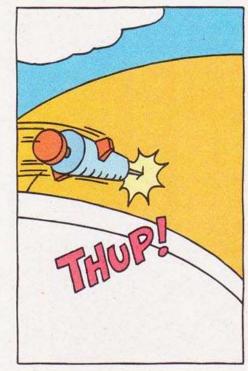








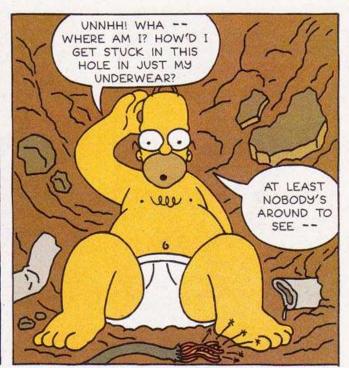












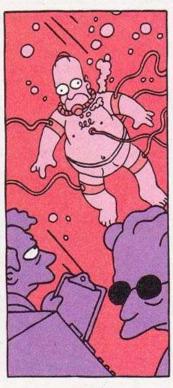


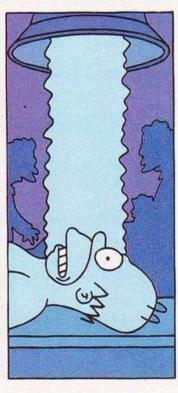


I DON'T WISH TO
INTERRUPT THIS
TOUCHING SCENE, BUT
AS A BENEVOLENT
EMPLOYER, I'M
CONCERED ABOUT THE
HEALTH OF MY LOYAL
EMPLOYEE. I'D LIKE MY
LAB TO RUN A FEW
TESTS ON YOU.

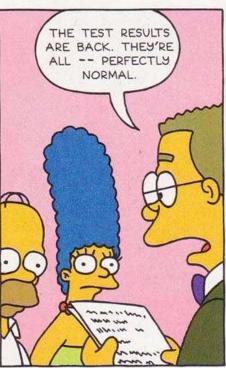
























THE EERIE OLD MANSION STANDS ALONE ON A HILL AT THE EDGE OF TOWN. THE OWNER OF THE HOUSE LEADS A RECLUSIVE EXISTENCE, WITH ONLY A SINGLE SERVANT



LITTLE IS KNOWN ABOUT THE OWNER, FOR HE IS GRUMPY AND ANTI-SOCIAL AND SHUNS CONTACT WITH THE TOWNSFOLK BELOW. RUMOR HAS IT, HOWEVER, THAT HE IS FABULOUSLY WEALTHY, AND THAT HIDDEN DEEP IN THIS HOUSE IS A TREASURE BEYOND IMAGINING.



INSIDE THE GREAT HOUSE, THE SAME ROUTINE IS OBSERVED EVERY EVENING. AFTER GORGING HIMSELF ON AN ENORMOUS MEAL OF GOURMET DELICACIES, THE OWNER RETIRES TO THE COMFORT OF HIS FAVORITE CHAIR. WITH HIS FAITHFUL DOG AT HIS FEET, HE SAVORS A FINE CIGAR AND AN AFTER-DINNER DRINK.



THEN COMES THE HIGHLIGHT OF HIS EVENING -- IN FACT, THE ONLY PART OF HIS ENTIRE EXISTENCE THAT GIVES HIM ANY TRUE PLEASURE -- AS HE SETTLES IN TO READ A SELECTION FROM HIS ENORMOUS LIBRARY -- A LIBRARY PAINSTAKINGLY ASSEMBLED AT UNSPEAKABLE EXPENSE THROUGH YEARS OF OBSESSIVE COLLECTING -- THE WORLD'S GREATEST LIBRARY OF COMIC BOOKS!



"THE OWNER OF THE LOCAL COMICS SHOP REFUSED TO NEGOTIATE ON THE PRICE -- UNTIL I THREATENED TO TELL THE VICE SQUAD THAT HE WAS SELLING BETTY PAGE TRADING CARDS TO MINORS. WE SETTLED ON 10% OF GUIDE. I LEFT THE SHOP CLUTCHING MY LATEST PRIZE -- ONLY TO BE ACCOSTED BY SOME LOWLIFE LOITERING OUTSIDE."



"I TAUGHT THE RUFFIAN A SHARP LESSON."



I'LL NEVER PATRONIZE THAT STORE AGAIN."

LATER, HIS READING DONE, THE COLLECTOR COMPLETES HIS EVENING RITUAL. HE CAREFULLY RETURNS THE PRECIOUS COMIC TO ITS PROTECTIVE

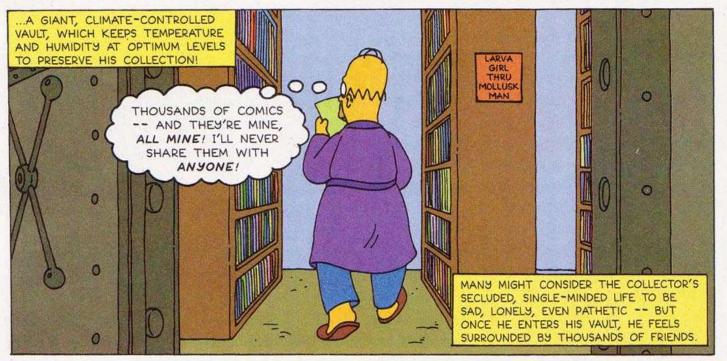


...THEN HE CARRIES HIS TREASURE DOWN AN ANCIENT STAIRCASE TO HIS CELLAR.



THERE, AMIDST BOXES AND CRATES OF LONG-FORGOTTEN HEIRLOOMS, HE HAS CONSTRUCTED A HOME FOR HIS COLLECTION...









THAT NIGHT, THE COLLECTOR GOES TO THE VAULT AS USUAL, BUT WHEN HE OPENS THE MASSIVE DOOR...



HEAT! ONE OF THE GREATEST ENEMIES OF OLD COMICS! CALMLY, THE COLLECTOR CHECKS THE THERMOSTAT...

OHMIGOSH! 97 DEGREES! THE CONTROL ISN'T WORKING! WHAT AM I GOING TO DO?!

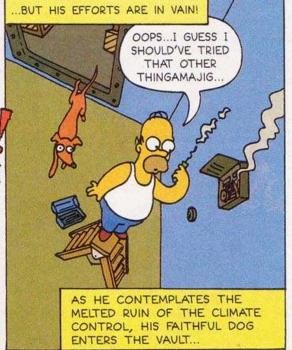


QUICKLY AND DECISIVELY, HE SETS TO WORK TO REPAIR THE MALFUNCTIONING UNIT. FIRST, HE ASSEMBLES HIS TOOLS...

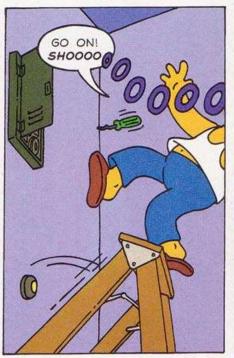


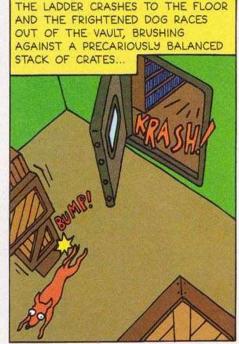
...THEN, WITH HIS VAST STORE OF TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE, HE BEGINS HIS TASK...

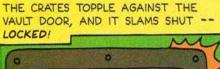










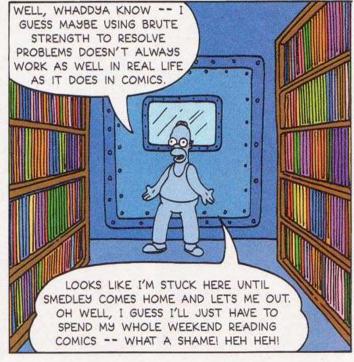


















THE TEMPERATURE INSIDE THE VAULT CONTINUES TO PLUNGE. NOW IT IS FAR BELOW FREEZING! THE COLLECTOR HUDDLES AGAINST THE DOOR FOR A LONG TIME, FIGHTING THE COLD. HE FEELS THE HORRIBLE NUMBNESS OF FROSTBITE OVERTAKING HIM.



ON MONDAY MORNING, SMEDLEY RETURNS. WHEN HE FINDS THAT HIS MASTER IS NOT UPSTAIRS, HE HEADS FOR THE VAULT. SEEING THE CRATES PILED AGAINST THE DOOR, HE IMMEDIATELY GRASPS THE SITUATION...



FRANTICALLY, HE MOVES THE CRATES AND OPENS THE DOOR. SMEDLEY IS HORRIFIED AS HIS MASTER EMERGES, HALF-FROZEN AND GIBBERING INSANELY...



SMEDLEY GAZES INTO THE VAULT AND SUDDENLY REALIZES WHAT HAS DRIVEN HIS MASTER MAD. THE SHELVES ARE EMPTY, AND ON THE FLOOR IS A GIANT PILE OF ASHES. IN ORDER TO KEEP FROM FREEZING TO DEATH, THE COLLECTOR HAD TO BURN HIS ENTIRE COMIC BOOK COLLECTION!



