



# The Drink Tank 454

# **Editorial by Chris: There is Hugo Drama**

**Yes, there is.** It's bad this time, really bad, on many levels. Thoughts many of us have had over the years are being pushed to the surface, and we're all looking at what's going on and trying to figure out what we do, what was done, and how we keep it from happening again.

But, of course, this does remind me of some things...

I went to an Antiquarian Book Fair in San Francisco yesterday. It was a good one, I'd gone two years ago, but this one was different; the original painting for Ursula K. LeGuin's *Left Hand of Darkness* was on display, though it had already sold to The Eaton Collection. Next to it in the display case were two Hugos - Terry Carr's from 1985 and 1987. They were there, the dealer who was liquidating the Carl-Lichtman collection (a guy who I REALLY don't enjoy) has them for sale. Everyone who came and took a look marveled at the Dillion's painting, but so many were fascinated by the Hugos.

I went home, and I took a look at my Hugos, up on top of our games cabinet where the cats are less likely to send them falling to the ground. They're different, the one that Carr

won were much simpler designs, but they were the same thing, the same meaning, the same idea, the same connections. The Hugos were, and are, the same. There's no difference between what they meant before McCarty and co. messed everything up and today. In fact, the meaning of the Hugos will likely never change.

Because they're special.

I've written fairly extensively about what the Hugos mean to me, about how they changed my life. I've also made no secret about my distaste for the folks who have tried, sometimes desperately, to tarnish them, and the folks who have tarnished them through their poor judgment.

But the Hugos are still, and always will be, a massively important part of my life, and the lives of every winner, every nominee.

Because, no matter what is done to the process, however hard the Admins sell out the awards, the history never changes.

My Hugos carry the same meaning as the ones won by Earl Kemp, Ed Meshkeys, Charles Brown, The Lynches. Chris Barkley's Hugo carries the same meaning as the ones won by Ted White, John Scalzi, Dave Langford,

Fred Pohl. Richard Man's the same weight as Vaughn Bode's, Tim Kirk, Alicia Austin, Delpyhyne, Mo, Sara Felix. These things have connections that are deeper, deeper than any controversy, deeper than any attack, any inattention, any thing you can name.

Because, at their heart, awards are about feelings of connection. The reason it's hard to start new awards and get them taken seriously is that they don't spring forward with that sense of connection. Dragon\*Con's Dragon Awards are a good example. They're still not seen to have the weight of the Hugos, though as they continue to be awarded, they're gaining those connections.

I love the Hugos; always have, always will. They're a huge moment in my life, but even before I won't one, they were important to me as a marker not only of quality, but of contact with a marvelous past.

So, let us rage against the problems that arise, and this year's villains certainly deserve it, but let's also remember the meaning of the Hugos in general.

Because, in the end, that's what really matters.

# **Thundergirls & Why I Love *Bob's Burgers* by Alissa Wales**

**One of the things I love** about *Bob's Burgers* is that the kids are so much themselves. They are fantastic individuals, and their family loves them. It's so wonderful to watch because of that. Tina Belcher, the oldest, is among other things, a Thundergirl. In the world of *Bob's Burgers*, the Thundergirl is much like a Girl Scout. A member wears a uniform with a sash and earns badges for doing activities. The units even sell cookies. The Thundergirls show up in a couple of episodes: "A River Runs Through Bob" (S4:E1) and "Tina Tailor Soldier Spy" (S5:E7).

"A River Runs Through Bob" is when Tina has missed her Troop's camping trip, and her family takes her on a make-up camping trip. Leave it to Bob to underpack for the trip and mayhem ensues. In "Tina Tailor Soldier Spy," Tina has left the life of the Thundergirls behind until her former troop leader, Ginny comes to ask for her help. There is a mole in their troop! Cookie sales are on the line, and Tina must go back into the troop and become a spy to find the mole, but is she the only one to hear the call of the Thundergirl this time?

As a leader for a Rainbow and Brownie unit for Girlguiding UK (and a former US Girl Scout), I found these episodes funny in a lot of ways. I remember cookie sales being competi-

tive, but not so much that this sort of thing would happen. I always felt like the Girl Scouts would work as a team to get the sales together, but to be fair I was young at the time. In the U.K., we do not sell cookies. I think this might be an oversight. It could very possibly be very popular, as it is in the United States. Additionally, the badges are great for life skill building, which I have always thought is great. I think the badge program is constantly evolving, and whilst I don't know much about the U.S. program any longer, I was just reminded about the first aid that we taught a young girl before she left our unit and how grateful she was for learning those skills.

More than anything, I love that this show gives us a quirky family with all of their flaws, and they absolutely adore each other and stay together no matter what. It is funny and beautiful in so many ways. We need more of this in our world.

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**"If she were a book, she'd be TWO BOOKS."**

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## **Family Cosplay: *Bob's Burgers* by Michelle Mendes Vazquez**

In 2015, my family started watching *Bob's Burgers*. By this point, it had been on air for a few years, so we had plenty of content to binge. While watching, we noticed certain character traits seemed to line up with our own family. My oldest son Andre seemed a lot like Tina. They both have a strong need to follow directions and feel uncomfortable when someone tries to get them to do otherwise. My youngest son Cesar Jr. (CJ) is all Gene. LOADS of personality and many great one-liners. Our daughter Evie is very well-behaved and a great student, but the older she gets the more noticeable her Louise sass has become. We were discussing the similarities between our family and the Belchers when we thought it might be fun to cosplay them.

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**"Life is a journey. That's all I got, I don't have advice. I'm nine."**

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It took a few months, but eventually, we decided to do this. Two days before Phoenix Comicon (what is now known as Phoenix Fan Fusion), we ran from store to store piecing together outfits for all of the characters. Since it was October, Spirit Halloween was open and we were able to find Louise's pink bunny ears there. Linda's signature red glasses were probably the hardest item to find. I eventually found a pair on Amazon that was perfect and



crossed my fingers in hopes of them arriving before the event. Somehow, everything came together, and we headed to the convention. My husband was worried no one was going to know who we were. We parked our car near a restaurant that had live music. The lady who was on stage stopped singing as we passed by and exclaimed, "Wow, *Bob's Burgers!* You look great!" This was a great sign and eased some of my husband's worry. Once we were in the convention center, we were bombarded, in the best of ways, by fellow con-goers asking to take our picture. As the day went on we stepped more into our character roles and got better at posing for pictures.

As the years have gone on, we've made small improvements to our cosplay. Added wigs, got a kuchikopi, and constructed a large burger for CJ to wear and dance in. Even though we've spent years doing this, it still feels really good to see people's faces light up with excitement once they recognize our characters. The happiness this has brought others and our own family has been the best part.



**“Forecast calls for fabulous!”**



**"I'm no hero. I put my bra on one boob at a time like everyone else"**



**"I am the alpha turkey."**



# **“Art Crawl” and the Actual Art of Art**

## **Crawling by Christopher J. Garcia**

**By far, the single greatest episode** of *Bob's Burgers* is “Art Crawl.” There’s some stiff competition, mostly the musical episodes that sometimes play out like a fever dream, but “Art Crawl” is just about the perfect episode of adult cartoons for today's TV.

And, oddly, I’ve discovered that it's truer than I would have thought.

The basic idea is this: Bob’s sister-in-law, Gayle, has painted a series of paintings which are of rear views of animals showing their anuses. That’s a cheap gag, right? It works though. The head of the Art Crawl committee objects and demands that Bob take them down from the walls of his restaurant. Bob, who hated the paintings and had taken them down himself, puts them back up, and rages at the head of the committee, his nemesis from the art supply store, who shows up frequently as a foil for Bob. This leads to the paintings then getting painted over with pink pantyhose, which Bob blames on the committee head, but turns

out to be his wife, Linda.

Also, as a part of the annual Art Crawl, the youngest Belcher child, Louise, has been forcing the kids of the neighborhood to make kid art to sell at the Art Crawl, basically using them as slave labor. She makes a ton of money, which allows her to save the day after Bob goes buck wild on the committee head’s art.

Yeah, a lot is going on.

The episode is perfectly paced, and while I wouldn’t call it mad cap, it is consistently funny in a way that makes the big hits feel like they’re a part of actual builds instead of one-offs, which does happen from time to time on *Bob's Burgers*. Especially Gene’s lines that seem to be out of nowhere.

Here’s what I’ve found though; there is truth here.

The idea of an Art Faire asking for paintings to be taken down because they’re not family-friendly is not unknown. I’ve seen it myself. A festival in Santa Clara back in the day refused

to allow a painter to display a tasteful nude (though they were doing the community a favor; it just wasn’t very good) and this led to if not an uproar, at least some grumbling.

Most festivals and fairs will have guidelines when applying. These usually include no nudity but also can include things such as no art that infringes other’s IP, no art that can be seen as inflammatory, and even no art that leaves behind a residue. That last one I kind of understand, and in a way, I get the rest. Most fests are family events, and when I’ve been to art fairs that are held at adults-only venues, such as wineries or private clubs, and without those restrictions they tend to draw a much different crowd and one that’s usually looking more towards profit than a nice day out.

And Art Crawl, it seems, was meant to be a nice day out kind of event.

In Boulder Creek, we’ve got First Fridays. A bunch of artists line the main drag and sell everything from wood carvings to bespoke



poems. Vanessa's there often, and she had a very successful month in December selling paintings, ornaments, hair flowers, and corn sacks.

Those are fabric sacks full of corn you put into the microwave to warm up and put on you dur-ing the cold nights. For some reason, they don't sell well in the summer months . . .

The Louise storyline is a classic riff, and maybe it was the fact that I programmed a festival of art documentaries that made it extra funny, or maybe the word is sad. There was a documentary about kids, 16, 17, and 18-year-olds, in Taiwan, who were painting up to 18 hours a day, mostly to fulfill the needs of large quantity buyers like hotels and restaurant chains. In *Bob's Burgers*, it's played for laughs, and you'd expect that from an animated sit-com. Still, the documentary, was about the sadness of life, though also about the relationships that the young men and women formed while nearly constantly painting.

I've probably watched "Art Crawl" a dozen times, and you can see all the elements of the actual faires that I attend pretty regular-ly. There's the shell art, the good paintings, and sometimes still drying as they're being hung. There's the guy in the hat sitting and smiling as people eye his wares. There's the shop owners who welcome the traffic, and the buyers who glance for a second, then walk on by. The po-tential buyers guilted into paying higher prices because the artist seemed so nice. All the ele-ments are there, and it's a hoot.



**"Shhh, shut your mouth, it's Art Crawl."**

# Louise Later On? by Chuck Surface



**LOUISE BELCHER, 29**

In 2020, an artist called Mr. Saturated posted images projecting how he felt the Belcher children would look 20 years down the line. He included thoughts on what they'd be doing with their lives as well. Most startlingly, Mr. Saturated sees Louise running Bob's Burgers, having taken over the shop from her dad. His reasoning? "Though she'd never admit it to his face, Louise greatly admired her father and secretly enjoyed working at the restaurant with him." Additionally, Bob's would become Louise's Burgers, she'd marry Regular-Sized Rudy, and she'd ditch the pink rabbit ears for a pink trucker's cap.

I don't see it. I can't imagine Louise settling for a humble life running a barely sustainable seaside burger shop. This is the kid who in "Touch of Eval(uations)" (S12:E11) figures out that teachers suddenly are behaving nicely because they're up for formal evaluations by their students. She then convinces her classmates to not fill out those questionnaires too quickly so the soft treatment would continue. However, she can't resist dinging her teacher, Miss LaBonz, once she discovers that LaBonz feels she doesn't put in enough effort. Of course, LaBonz recognizes Louise's talents and wants her efforts to match her potential. I agree. Louise is the only one who uncovered the instructors' true intentions – to butter up students for better evaluations.

But Louise does at times get motivated. Perhaps the most infamous example stems from the episode, "Art Crawl" (S1:E8). A neighbor art festival ignites Louise's monetary lust, and she first manipulates her siblings into painting works she can sell at a stand in front of Bob's Burgers. Later, when sales are lagging, she replaces them with Andy and Ollie, the Pesto twins, basically exploiting their labor for cash. Now that's motivation. Sure, Louise's enterprise makes the Tom Sawyer fence-painting scam look like Bonehead Grifter 101, but still she shows motivation and talent.



Writing for Cartoonvibe.com, Kenny Bode of Season 10, depicts Louise mentoring a classmate, Kaylee, instructing her on pranking schemes that would give seasoned con artists a run for their money.” Furthermore:

Whether she’s trying to extract money from her parents’ wallet, defend the honor of the family restaurant, or exact revenge on anyone who dares cross her path, Louise’s plans are often elaborate, well-thought-out, and hilariously flawed. With her crafty mind, she is the quintessential mix of youthful innocence and cunning intelligence.

Other students recognize her mad skills too. “Prank You for Being a Friend,” the final epi-

sode of Season 10, depicts Louise mentoring a classmate, Kaylee, instructing her on pranking. Kaylee recognizes Louise’s advanced knowledge, and who wouldn’t want a master class from the best? All give props to Louise for her advanced chicanery and scheming nature. Loki himself might tip his helmet and offer a cheery, “What’s up?”

These incidents, and many others tempt me toward predicting that Louise will grow into a world-class grifter, not a street operator who stiffes average working people with three-card monte or who preys upon elderly folks many low-lives target because they judge them to be soft-minded and thus vulnerable. No, Louise, once she overcomes the youthful impetuosity that

hamstrings many of her intrigues, will do better than that. She’ll devise long cons like Micheal “Mickey Bricks” Stone from the British television series, *Hustle* does, or maybe she’ll follow after real-life artisans much as did Lord Gordon Gordon and Victor Lustig, the man who successfully conned Al Capone and sold the Eiffel Tower – twice. Louise’s marks will have it coming. Entitled fat cats, corrupt politicians, victimizers themselves, basically, anyone who needs to be taken down a peg or two, watch out.

If I resist that temptation, however, I perceive what others detect about Louise, that she possesses honor, and that she’s fiercely protective of her family and friends, even if she often manipulates them wildly. When discussing “Touch of Eval(uations),” Rebecca Mills of *Hiddenremote.com* asks an important question, going a step further than I did above:

Louise starts to feel bad about what she wrote especially after Miss LaBonz talks about how Louise needs to be motivated and that’s why she’s harsh on Louise. To make things right, Louise decides to try and steal her evaluation so Miss. LaBonz won’t be hurt but she eventually makes it better by giving her a new evaluation via the PA system. In the end, Miss LaBonz ends up getting a prize for what Louise did and the two begin to argue, showing just how much they care.

Are Bob’s Burgers finally making Louise a more mature character?

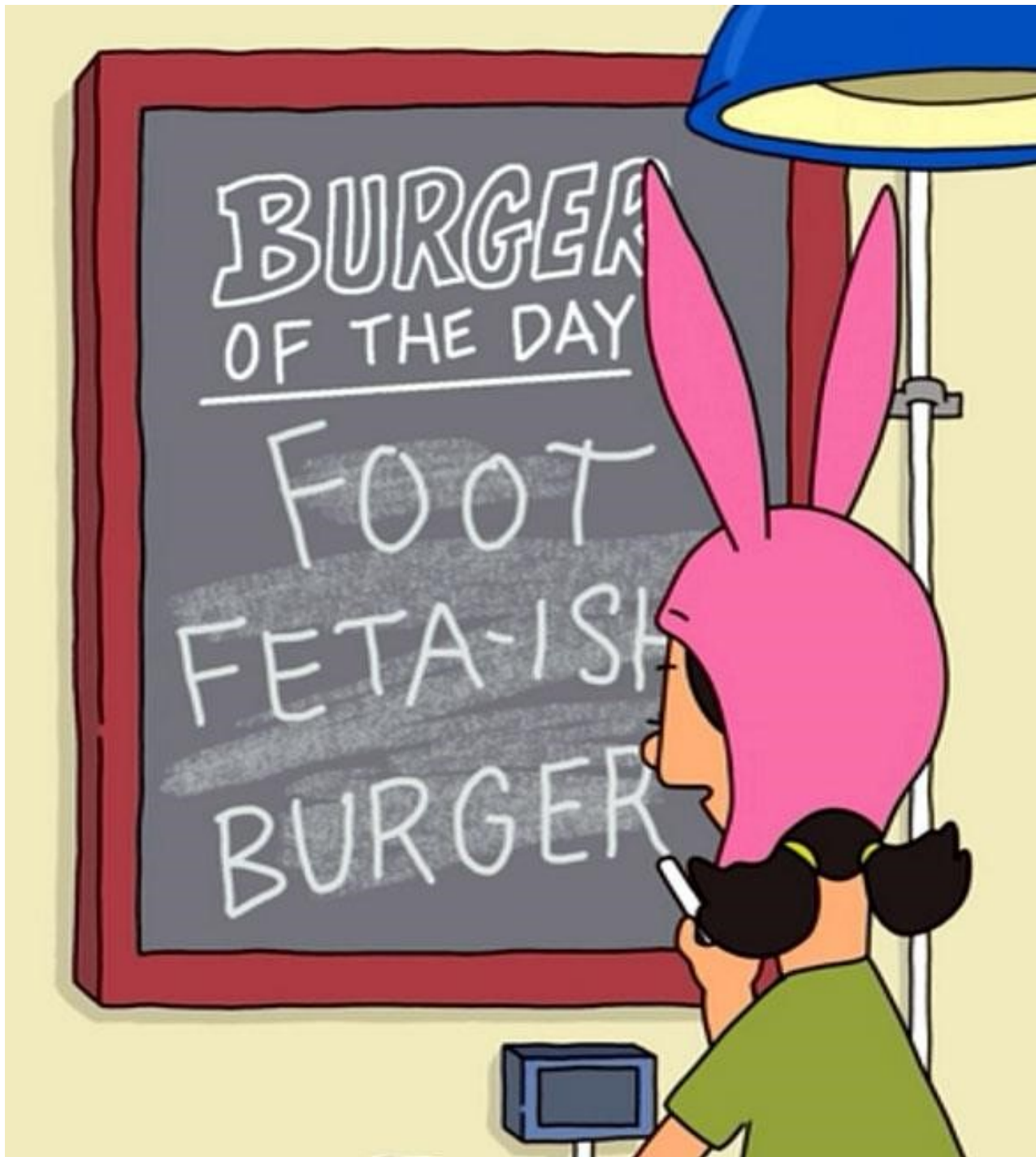
About “Prank You for Being a Friend,”

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AVClub.com's Les Chappell explains how Louise's deeper motivations activate after she learns why Kaylee wants to up her pranking game, to facilitate home-schooling for herself, which extends beyond Wagstaff being a sucky school:

The fact that she wants to get it right also gives way to another truth about Louise, that she doesn't want it to happen if it's going to be for the wrong reasons. When she learns that Kaylee wants to be home-schooled not just because of Wagstaff, but because she doesn't want to be around everyone, it furthers the crack that started with season four's "Slumber Party" and that's kept running as recently as this season's "Three Girls And A Little Wharfy." The Louise of prior seasons might be willing to let this go through, but Louise has grown to the point that she can admit she enjoys the company of people outside her family. (Hell, even her stalker's been able to break that shell.) It adds an extra level of poignancy to pulling the plug on the prank, that she subconsciously wants Kaylee to learn the same lessons she did.

I join my voice with the critics' choir pointing out one huge fact. Over later seasons, Louise has been evolving. But will she completely overcome her Machiavellian tendencies, not achieve Hermes-level grifting notoriety? I specu-



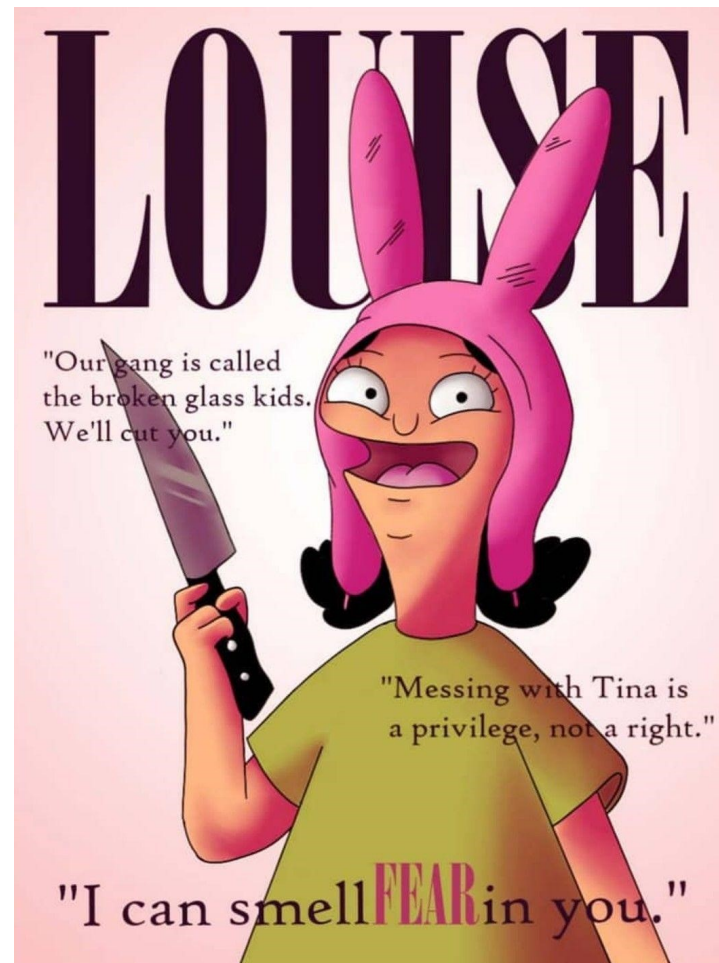
late that if her growth continues, she'll apply her inborn gifts for better purposes. If indeed Mr. Saturated is correct and Louise takes over her dad's business, it won't be business as usual. She'll make us forget Ray Kroc ever dreamed of Big Macs or that Dave Thomas made us ask, "Where's the beef?" Her cunning intelligence and drive for gain make her a perfect capitalist, but her developing moral sense eventually may win out, and she'll honor her father's legacy in ways no one could have imagined.

Wait! I must give the final word to Kristen Schaal, the actor who has been voicing Louise since day one. The bottom line: Schaal never wants Louise to grow up. She told Brandon Zachary and CBR.com why:

I've gotten this question a lot, and I've tried to answer it in years past where I'm like, "Oh, she'd be a blank-blank and a blank-blank." Every time I do it, it always kinda hurts my soul because I've gotten this question a lot, and I've tried to answer it in years past where I'm like, "Oh, she'd she's not that character yet. I mean, every child is not going to be the same person when they become an adult. So I just want to keep them [little]."

Ms. Schaal helps us realize Louise Belcher will never truly grow up. Cartoon children never do. Well, Pebbles Flintstone and Bamm-Bamm Rubble did, at least into adolescence, but so what? It's fun to speculate about where Louise

will go, but it's much more fun to enjoy her at the moment when she speaks to the child within me. Rabbit ears, forever, Mr. Saturated. Rabbit ears forever.



# Animated Glass: A Christmas Story By Christopher J. Garcia

## I love minimalist music.

I started listening to Tape music in the 1990s, with Steve Reich's *It's Gonna Rain*, and then to stuff by the likes of Terry Riley a fair bit later. That stuff was cool, but there was one name I didn't initially cotton to -- Philip Glass.

You see, he's pretty much the poster boy for minimalist music for the last few decades, and for AGES I resisted his work, though I was fascinated by him as a figure. I got to meet him, briefly, at MoMA in New York City, and he was cool. I haven't ever managed to see him perform with the Philip Glass Ensemble, but I have heard him play piano, and my friend Susan Ciani knew him well in New York City, back when he still drove his cab.

It wasn't until I saw *The Hours* that I got him. It's one of the finest pieces of cinematic music ever composed. It's evocative, beautiful, and never the sort of cagey subversion that many of the Glassworks I'd previously enjoyed had featured. I loved it, I still love it, and I played it for my kids a lot when they were really little.

So why, in this issue about *Bob's Burgers*, am I talking about something as high-brow as Philip Glass?

Because the single best use of his music in the mainstream was in an incredible segment.

The episode "The Plight Before Christmas" is centered around the kids having conflicting events that mom Linda wants to attend. There's Tina's Thundergirls holiday play, Louise's poetry contest, and Gene's xylophone performance. There's back-and-forth stuff, as Louise is trying to sneak the word "poop" into her poem, and the substitute music teacher knows nothing about music. The first performance at Gene's show is terrible, but Gene comes up with an idea.

And then, the greatest animated montage in the history of adult-focused prime-time animation takes place.

Louise decides to read a straight version of her poem, "What's Around the Tree," and is inspired by Tina looking at her with love that seems to call for sincerity. At the same time, Gene's music class has begun playing Glass's

work, *Mishima*. The layering here is perfect, and while I can't think of ever having heard this version, it's incredibly powerful when combined with the idea of Louise fighting off her need to be brash and middle-child-ish and just be a human.

I won't lie; I cry a little every time I put it on.

Glass's work is so perfect for a school music class because it's deceptively simple. You could have done this with any piece of music, and the idea wouldn't work nearly as well because it would be impossible to believe that it worked with the level of talent that class would have. I've been told that Glass is hard to perform because of the simplicity which requires you to turn off a part of your musicianship, much like when a trained singer has to sing badly.

I love this segment so much, and it's one that I return to constantly.

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**"I think we should tour, like a jam band, like The Flaming Lips, but with xylophones and we're in sixth grade."**

