It seems like a lifetime ago in different universe when I first bore witness to one of the most impactful television shows of my life, The Simpsons. We had moved to Middle America from Europe the year before. Both my parents had been stationed overseas with the Air Force when I came along. Moving to America was fine and I adapted easily except for thinking every spired church was a castle.

My father would watch TV in the evenings and I would sit and watch with him. I was far too young to take everything in and remember it, but certain things I did like Star Trek the original series, Star Wars: Empire Strikes Back specifically the Hoth scene, Cops intro, and Rescue 911 particularly the intro credits with the Huey helicopter with the Red Cross.

I had watched cartoons in the morning as my parents got ready for work and the afternoon before dinner. One day sitting with my father watching TV a cartoon came on after dinner and that made me confused, but excited. It was The Simpsons specifically Some Enchanted Evening, I don’t remember everything in the whole episode, but I do remember feeling exhausted after watching Bart, Lisa and Maggie catch the baby sitter and then Homer and Marge untying her and letting her go, what a twist for my little mind. It was not on the original air date 13 May 1990, but most likely a rerun a couple months later, because we had moved that June along with my new baby brother.

I didn’t fully comprehend what I had seen, but I had enjoyed and we watched more and more episodes. Over the years The Simpsons took on the role of another family member or pet in the house, much to my mother’s chagrin. Every weekday evening around 6:30 revolved around The Simpsons, would dinner be before or after an episode? Each Sunday at 7:00. As time went on I discovered more and more cartoons. I recall my father hurrying my brother and I along to dry off from the neighborhood pool and get home because a new series was starting, Batman the Animated Series.

I remember being in Kindergarten and it being library day. We had a substitute and I asked if I could pick a book out of the “older kids section,” but specifically being ambiguous and saying “out of this shelf?” Kindergartners were only allowed to get books out of a corner of the library designated for them. I liked airplanes, and there weren’t any good airplane books in the Kindergartner section, I wanted something more technical, even though I couldn’t read. I had known were the airplane books were and would often waste my library time looking at them until the teacher caught me and called me back to the kindergarten area. The substitute not knowing the rules said sure. As I stood in line I remember thinking what a great day it was that I had a real airplane book in my hand, it was a generic beige hard bound airplane book with an A-10 on the cover The Military Aircraft Library: Ground Attack Aircraft. Then I remembered that library day was new Simpsons day, but there was one more obstacle in my way, the librarian

It wasn’t until I started school and talked to other kids that I realized how good I had it. A lot of them said they weren’t allowed to watch it, and a few others could and we instantly became friends, bounded by our love of illustrated yellow human animation. I remember being over at kids houses playing video games, something we didn’t have, or watching Nickolodeon on cable, another luxury we didn’t have and seeing the clock tick closer to 6:30. I would ask if we could watch the simpsons to be told “I’m not allowed.” Well, all this cool stuff, cable, sega, Nintendo is great, but I could watch the simpsons and that is what each evening of my elementary life revolved around.

I recall us getting a new remote for our ancient knob TV and that was around the time a number of changes occurred. I recall thinking the TV was broken or color was off because a number of the characters hair had changed color like Chief Wiggum.

I recall being at my Grandparents house and talking to my parents on the phone one evening. My brother had talked to my parents and then it was my turn, I talked to my mom and I thinking I talked to my dad for 5 minutes before he said, “hey the Simpsons are on.” We both quickly said our goodbyes and got to watching the episode which was the Summer of 4 Ft. 2.

A lot of people cite Season 9 as the beginning of the downfall of The Simpsons and I agree. Most cite Season 9 Episode 2 as that crux that started the fall. The fall and winter was always a risky time to watch The Simpson due to NFL games running long and pushing The Simpsons back half an hour, an hour, two, three hours. On that particular day a cold January morning sitting in Sunday school hating everything that was going on, I remember waiting by the door to be picked up and thinking “at least the simpsons are on tonight, today isn’t all bad.” That night I remember being so disappointed. It was the episode All Singing All Dancing. I enjoyed clip shows before, Not Another Clip Show, 138th Episode Spectacular, but this singing clip show made me question and realize this wonderful part of my life isn’t so infallible. I continued to watch the series each evening and catch every new episode every Sunday.