

= Tales from the Public Domain =

" Tales from the Public Domain " is the fourteenth episode of The Simpsons thirteenth season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on March 17 , 2002 . It is the third trilogy episode of the series , which had become annual since the twelfth season 's " Simpsons Tall Tales " , consisting of three self @-@ contained segments that are based on historical stories . The first segment puts Homer Simpson in the role of Odysseus in the ancient Greek epic poem Odyssey . The second segment tells the story of Saint Joan of Arc , and the third and final segment lampoons William Shakespeare 's tragedy Hamlet .

The episode was written by Andrew Kreisberg , Josh Lieb and Matt Warburton , and Mike B. Anderson served as the director . Show runner and executive producer Al Jean stated that the episode was " very fun for the writers " to do because it " allow [ed] them to parody great works of literature . " On the other hand , Anderson stated that the episode was " much harder " to direct than others because , like with Treehouse of Horror episodes , the animators had to make as many character designs for one act as they would for one normal episode .

In its original American broadcast , the episode was seen by more than 4 % of the population between ages 18 and 49 . Following its release on DVD and Blu @-@ ray however , the episode received mixed reviews from critics .

= = Plot = =

Homer is told that he has an overdue book from the library , which he checked out when Bart was a baby . He says that he had intended to read to Bart every day , but various things had gotten in his way . Before he returns it , he reads from the book , telling three stories .

= = = D 'oh , Brother Where Art Thou ? = = =

In this story , Homer is Odysseus , and delivers the King of Troy (Ned Flanders) a Trojan horse . He and his crew , including Apu , Lenny , Moe , Professor Frink and Carl , kill all of Troy 's citizens and win . However , he refuses to sacrifice a sheep , angering the gods , Zeus (Mayor Quimby) , Dionysus (Barney) , and Poseidon (Captain Horatio McCallister) . Dionysus tries to destroy Odysseus with a lightning bolt , but misses and instead destroys the island of Atlantis . Poseidon literally blows Odysseus and his crew to the Sirens (Patty and Selma) and visit Circe (Lindsey Naegle) , who turns his crew into pigs , whom Odysseus eats . Circe orders Odysseus to go through Hades , crossing the River Styx (which has the Styx song " Lady " playing during the crossing) , in order to go home so he can see Penelope (Marge) and Telemachus (Bart) . When he arrives back to Ithaca , he spears all of the suitors (Krusty the Clown , Kirk Van Houten , Groundskeeper Willie , Mr. Burns , and Sideshow Mel) trying to please Penelope . Penelope decides to take him back , though he leaves to go to Moe 's (even though Moe is killed and eaten by Odysseus earlier in the episode) .

= = = Hot Child in the City = = =

Lisa is Joan of Arc , who leads the French against the English in the Hundred Years ' War , which Homer implies was also called " Operation Speedy Resolution " . Despite her family 's concern , she joins the army , where she has new ideas about defeating the enemy . She meets the King of France (Milhouse) . During a battle , the English capture Joan and put her on trial . She is accused of witchcraft , and sentenced to death . When Lisa claims that she was following God 's will , Groundskeeper Willie reveals that he too was chosen by God , but to lead the English armies against the French . God 's voice then excuses himself by revealing that the two were never supposed to meet .

The use of Groundskeeper Willie (Scottish character) and the flag of the English army (Union Flag of Great Britain) are obvious inaccuracies , as England and Scotland were separate states and

many Scottish fought with France during the Hundred Years War .

As they read the end , Joan of Arc is being burnt at the stake , still waiting for God to save her (the real Joan had said several days earlier that her voices had spoken to her of martyrdom) . Shocked , Lisa asks Homer if she was really burned to death . Marge then interrupts , claiming that Joan of Arc was rescued by Sir Lancelot , and they get married and live in a spaceship . She then rips out the last page and eats it , remarking that it is easier to chew than the video of Bambi .

= = = Do the Bard , Man = = =

Bart is Prince Hamlet in this Simpsons version of William Shakespeare 's classic . His uncle Claudius (Moe) marries Gertrude (Marge) after killing King Hamlet (Homer) by way of poison . The King returns to his son as a ghost , telling him of the betrayal and requesting that his death be avenged . Prince Hamlet (Bart) , with the help of a professional actor (Krusty) , puts on a play to make Claudius reveal himself to be guilty ; however , Hamlet 's reaction leads everyone to believe that he is crazy , so Ophelia (Lisa) decides to " out @-@ crazy " him by prancing around and singing a stupid song , eventually jumping out the window and into the moat where she drowns . Because Hamlet knows what he did , Claudius attempts to kill him . Hamlet , aiming to kill Claudius , accidentally kills Polonius (Chief Wiggum) . His son , Laertes (Ralph Wiggum) , proposes to duel Prince Hamlet for revenge . As his " practice stab , " Laertes kills himself , and Hamlet proceeds to murder Claudius . Rosencarl and Guildenlenny (Carl and Lenny) , meanwhile , have been covered in poison and kill each other with a high five . Hamlet walks away to celebrate , but he slips on some blood and dies . Seeing a big mess she does not want to clean up , Gertrude commits suicide by hitting herself in the head with a mace .

Bart thinks Hamlet was boring despite every character being murdered , but Homer tells him that the story led to the film Ghostbusters , and all the Simpsons dance to the theme .

= = Production = =

" Tales from the Public Domain " was directed by Mike B. Anderson and written by Andrew Kreisberg , Josh Lieb and Matt Warburton . It originally aired on March 17 , 2002 on the Fox network . " Tales from the Public Domain " is the third trilogy episode produced for the series , the other two being " Simpsons Bible Stories " from season 10 , and " Simpsons Tall Tales " from season 12 . Al Jean , the show runner for the episode , stated that trilogy episodes are " very fun for the writers " to do because it allows them to parody " great works of literature " and condense them into one act each .

Before writing the episode , the writers had decided that one of the segments would feature Lisa as the main character . According to Jean , the writers found it very difficult to find a historical story for Lisa because there are " so few [historical stories] that star women " . They had the same problem when pitching stories for " Simpsons Tall Tales " , in which they resorted to giving Lisa the role of " Connie Appleseed " , a feminization of the historical figure Johnny Appleseed . The writers eventually settled on Saint Joan of Arc . According to the episode 's supervising producer Don Payne , Scottish actor David Tennant watched " Do the Bard , Man " along with the cast of Hamlet during their first rehearsal . The segment has also been used in schools to teach students about Shakespeare 's literary work .

In the DVD audio commentary for the episode , Anderson stated that trilogy episodes , like the Treehouse of Horror episodes , are " much harder " to direct than normal ones because the animators have to make as many designs for each act as they would for one normal episode . In the scene in which Joan gets torched by the English , Jean specifically ordered Anderson to " make sure she doesn 't get burned " , even though she was surrounded by flames . Jean explained in the commentary that , when Mike Scully was show runner for The Simpsons , Jean learned that " people do not wanna see changes in [the characters '] basic design " when the character gets hurt . He added that , because the viewer is " so attached to the characters , [the viewers] don 't wanna see ... especially Lisa , get hurt in any way . " In order to make Homer 's ghost in the third segment

transparent , the animators had to " double expose " him ; Homer 's cels were first shot normally and then with a diminished opacity . In the first segment , clouds can be seen moving behind Zeus . The clouds were animated by airbrushing the cels and then moving them slowly in order to make it " look heavenly " .

= = Cultural references = =

Each segment is based on and include references to historical stories ; " D 'oh Brother , Where Art Thou " takes its story from the ancient Greek epic poem the Odyssey , while taking its name from the movie O Brother , Where Art Thou ? (also based on the Odyssey) , " Hot Child in the City " is based on the life and legend of Saint Joan of Arc , a French peasant girl who , as a teenager , led the French army to several important victories during the Hundred Years ' War , and " Do the Bard , Man " spoofs William Shakespeare 's tragedy Hamlet , while the title takes its name from " Do the Bartman " , a song performed by Bart early in the series .

The song that the sirens are singing in the first segment is a parody on the 1978 disco song " Copacabana " by Barry Manilow . In order to return to Ithaca , Homer crosses the river Styx , in which the dead can be seen dancing " Lady " by the band Styx . In the second segment , the captain resembling Chief Wiggum is initially leading the French army . The soldier resembling Lou points out that the captain " keeps switching back from French and English . " The scene satirizes films like Doctor Zhivago in which the Russians speak with a British accent even though they are in Russia . At the end of the act , Marge can be seen eating the page which shows Joan 's demise and , say " Well , it 's easier to chew than that Bambi video . " The scene is a reference to a scene in the Disney film Bambi , in which Bambi 's mother is shot to death by hunters .

In the beginning of the third act , Bart argues that modern writers like Steven Bochco , one of the creators of the television series NYPD Blue , are more talented than Shakespeare . Bochco saw the episode with his children and was so flattered that he sent The Simpsons staff some NYPD Blue merchandise . After the ghost of Homer has spoken to Bart , he leaves Bart 's room by flying through the wall , causing slime to appear on the wall . This is a reference to Slimer , a ghost from the Ghostbusters franchise who has a similar function .

= = Release = =

In its original American broadcast on March 17 , 2002 , " Tales from the Public Domain " , along with a new episode of Malcolm in the Middle , received more than a full rating point more than ABC 's showing of the film Snow White : The Fairest of Them All , which received a 3 @. @ 1 rating among adults between ages 18 and 49 , according to Nielsen Media Research . This means that the episode was watched by more than 4 % of the American population of said demographic at the time of its broadcast . On August 24 , 2010 , the episode was released as part of The Simpsons : The Complete Thirteenth Season on DVD and Blu @- @ ray .

Following the release of The Simpsons thirteenth season , " Tales from the Public Domain " received mixed reviews from critics . Colin Jacobsson of DVD Movie Guide wrote that The Simpsons trilogy episodes " tend to be pretty spotty . " Of the three stories , Jacobsson liked " Do the Bard , Man " the most , although he overall found the episode to be " mediocre " . Adam Rayner of Obsessed with Film wrote that , even though the episode " has a few laughs " , it " just feels half @- @ hearted " , and , writing for 411Mania , Ron Martin described the episode as being " just a lazy way out for the writers " . Giving the episode a negative review , Nate Boss of Project : Blu wrote that the episode is " awful " and " Kinda annoying " , and that it " has been done so many times , it 's hardly all that funny " . On the other hand , Casey Broadwater of Blu @- @ ray.com wrote that he is " particularly fond of [the episode] " and Rosie Fletcher of Total Film considered it to be a " stand @- @ out " episode in the season . The Vulture column of New York magazine named it one of the ten best episodes of the show 's later era .