

= The Last Temptation of Homer =

" The Last Temptation of Homer " is the ninth episode of The Simpsons ' fifth season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on December 9 , 1993 . In the episode , a female employee named Mindy is hired at the nuclear power plant . Homer and Mindy find themselves attracted to each other , but even though Homer is very tempted by her , he stays faithful to his wife Marge . Meanwhile , Bart becomes an outcast and makes friends with a group of nerds after he is prescribed glasses , special shoes , and throat spray which changes his voice .

The episode was written by Frank Mula and directed by Carlos Baeza . It did not get the usual amount of laughs at the test screenings , which made the staff worry the show was not as funny as they expected . Michelle Pfeiffer guest starred in the episode as Mindy and received praise for her performance , including a spot on Entertainment Weekly 's list of the 16 best guest appearances on The Simpsons . The episode features cultural references to films such as The Wizard of Oz , It 's A Wonderful Life , and A Christmas Carol . Since airing , the episode has received mostly positive reviews from television critics . It acquired a Nielsen rating of 12 @. @ 7 , and was the highest @- @ rated show on the Fox network the week it aired .

= = Plot = =

After Homer and his coworkers barely escape from a gas leak at the nuclear power plant , Homer 's coworker is fired when he asks Mr. Burns to put in a real emergency exit . After breaking numerous labor laws in hiring a replacement , such as hiring illegal aliens and ducks , the United States Department of Labor demands that Burns make changes in the power plant 's policies , including hiring at least one female worker . A beautiful woman named Mindy Simmons is brought in and Homer finds he is falling in love with her . Barney advises Homer to talk to Mindy because they will most likely have nothing in common . Homer does so , and to his horror , he finds they have exactly the same personality and interests . Meanwhile , Marge is sick with a bad cold , which makes her very unattractive to Homer .

Meanwhile , Bart is sent to an eye specialist after it is discovered he has poor vision . The optometrist decides he has lazy eye and fits him with special , thick glasses he has to wear for two weeks . Bart also finds out he has a dry scalp that can only be treated by matting his hair down with a medicated salve , therefore parting his hair to both sides . He also receives a pair of oversized shoes to help his posture , and a spray in his throat to cure the redness , which temporarily gives him a squeaky voice . These adjustments give Bart the appearance of , and gradually turn him into , a nerd . He is picked on and beaten up regularly by bullies for the duration of the two weeks . Eventually , Bart comes back to school in his normal appearance , explaining he is no longer a nerd , but the bullies still decide to beat him up anyway .

Homer does his best to avoid Mindy , who is falling in love with Homer , but despite his best efforts , they keep ending up together . Eventually , Homer decides to talk to Mindy , and say that due to their attraction , they should completely avoid each other . However , things get worse when Homer and Mindy are sent to represent the Springfield Nuclear Power Plant at the National Energy Convention in Capital City . After a romantic dinner as an award for winning the Convention , Homer and Mindy go back to their hotel room , and Homer expresses his worries . Mindy tells Homer how she feels about him , but assures him that nothing has to happen between them , and that it is up to him to decide how far their relationship will go . Even though he is very tempted by her , Homer declares his faithfulness to Marge . Mindy accepts his decision and leaves after they share a kiss . Later , Marge shows up with Homer to share a romantic evening together .

= = Production = =

The episode was written by Frank Mula and directed by Carlos Baeza . The idea was conceived by the then @- @ show runner David Mirkin . When he was hired to work on The Simpsons , one of his goals was to study the aspect of Homer 's character if he was " really tempted away " from Marge .

Mirkin wanted to find out what would happen in a situation where Homer finds himself attracted to another woman . The Simpsons creator Matt Groening had previously written an episode for the show 's third season , called " Colonel Homer " , where Homer finds himself attracted to a country singer named Lurleen Lumpkin . In that episode , Lurleen immediately had a " crush " on Homer , but Homer was not aware of it until later on . With this episode , Mirkin wanted Homer to immediately know he was attracted to Mindy . Mirkin thought it was a " great exploration " to see what happened to Homer in this particular case . The episode did not get the usual amount of laughs at the animatic test screening , which made the staff worry it was not as funny as they expected . Mirkin said it had to do with the fact that because there were very " subtle " performances in the episode , the animation had to be " exactly right " for it to be funny . Baeza and David Silverman , another animation director on the show , worked " hard " on the episode . Mirkin said from the very beginning it was a " huge group effort " from both the writing and the animation staff .

Many scenes in the animatic portrayed Mindy as flirty . Mirkin did not like this because the secret of the episode was Homer and Mindy are two good people who are thrown into the situation and " can 't help that their libidos are going crazy upon seeing each other " . He added that the two characters have " so much in common " that it is " not just a physical relationship , but a mental connection as well " , and that Mindy is not a seductress but rather a woman just as nervous as Homer . Mirkin also pointed out that while Homer is being tempted by a " seemingly perfect " woman at work , his wife could not be more " imperfect " since she has got a cold and looks sick . " He 's trying to connect with his family , but with Marge looking sick and Bart looking like a nerd , everything is just not working , " Mirkin said .

American actress Michelle Pfeiffer provided the voice of Mindy Simmons in the episode . All the writers showed up at the recording studio in West Los Angeles to see her record her lines . When Pfeiffer entered the room with her daughter , Pfeiffer was " mobbed " by the energy of the writers and directors , who were excited to see her . Mirkin , who directed Pfeiffer in the studio , was nervous because he thought she was a beautiful woman who was on a " completely different level " than the other actors and actresses he had directed on the show . Pfeiffer was also nervous because she had never voiced an animated character . Mirkin told her : " You 're gonna love this more than anything you have ever done because it 's calm and pleasant , and we have so much time to play and experiment . " This helped her calm down and by the end of the session , she was " really relaxed " and they had a " fantastic " time . Silverman told Pfeiffer to not sound too flirty , and that she should just act herself . In one scene in the episode , Mindy drools as she eats doughnuts , much like Homer does . To get the right drool sound , Pfeiffer put broccoli and water in her mouth . Mirkin said he did not have to give much direction during the recording of Homer and Mindy 's final scene together , in which Mindy tells Homer how she feels about him . Pfeiffer " hit it really well " and they did it several times to get it " more and more real " . Mirkin also thought that Pfeiffer completely understood the part and played it perfectly . He described her as " one of those actresses that you don 't even have to see to know they 're great , instead you can hear from her voice what a brilliant actress she is . " Dan Castellaneta was also praised by Mirkin for his performance as Homer . Castellaneta struggled to be " sweet " and " moving " in his performance .

When Homer calls a marriage counseling hotline in the episode , he accidentally knocks himself unconscious in the phone booth . In a dream , he is approached by his guardian angel . The angel , in the form of Colonel Klink , shows Homer what his life would be like without Marge . Colonel Klink is a character on the American television series Hogan 's Heroes . Klink 's actor in Hogan 's Heroes , Werner Klemperer , provided the voice of Klink in this episode . Mirkin said Klemperer was a " fantastic sport " to do the character . Since Hogan 's Heroes had gone off the air in 1971 , he had forgotten how to play Klink . Mirkin therefore had to do an impression of Klink that Klemperer could imitate to get it right .

= = Cultural references = =

When Bart receives new glasses , scalp treatment , orthopedic shoes , and throat spray , he does an impersonation of Jerry Lewis ' nerdy character in The Nutty Professor . When Homer first meets

Mindy , he imagines her as Venus in Sandro Botticelli 's painting The Birth of Venus . To deal with Homer and Mindy charging room service to the company , Mr. Burns unleashes flying monkeys in the manner of the Wicked Witch of the West , as seen in the 1939 film The Wizard of Oz . However , the attempt fails as the monkeys all fall to their deaths . The scene between Homer and Colonel Klink from Hogan 's Heroes , wondering what his life would have been like if he married Mindy and not Marge , draws from the films It 's A Wonderful Life and A Christmas Carol . When Homer meets Mindy in the elevator , he thinks " unsexy thoughts " to avoid being seduced by her . He imagines Barney in a bikini and humming the theme tune to the American sitcom I Dream of Jeannie . Homer attempts to read the notes for Mindy that he wrote on his hand , but they have smeared out because of sweat . In his attempt , Homer unknowingly babbles the Nam Myoho Renge Kyo , a Buddhist chant in Nichiren Buddhism and SGI . This is a reference to an Akbar and Jeff cartoon , written by Matt Groening , in which the same mantra is used . When Homer notices the sweat , he says he is " sweating like [film critic] Roger Ebert " . In the bathroom , Homer sings a rough version of the song " Mandy " by Barry Manilow , replacing " Mandy " with " Mindy " . Homer refers to comic strip Ziggy when he wonders if Mindy agrees the title character has become " too preachy " . Barry White 's song " Can 't Get Enough of Your Love , Babe " is played in the episode 's final scene where Homer and Marge make out at the hotel room . When Bart is being fitted for correctional glasses the optician reveals former Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin had a pair just like Bart 's .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast , " The Last Temptation of Homer " finished 24th (tied with The Fresh Prince of Bel Air) in the ratings for the week of December 6 ? 12 , 1993 . It acquired a Nielsen rating of 12 @. @ 7 . The episode was the highest @-@ rated show on the Fox network that week .

Since airing , the episode has received mostly positive reviews from television critics . In 2003 , it was placed tenth on Entertainment Weekly 's top 25 The Simpsons episode list , and The Daily Telegraph characterized the episode as one of " The 10 Best Simpsons Television Episodes " . Nancy Basile of About.com named it one of her top twenty favorite episodes of the show , and said Michelle Pfeiffer " is so elegant and beautiful , that the irony of her playing a burping love interest for Homer Simpson is funny enough . " She added " the thorny issue of adultery is tackled in a way only The Simpsons could , " and " though Homer is contemplating cheating , he 's a sympathetic and almost innocent character . " Robert Canning of IGN called the episode " smart , touching and funny " , and said " it did a great job showing Homer 's struggle to deal with the flirtations of a co @-@ worker . "

The authors of the book I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide , Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood , called it a " wonderfully scripted episode " . DVD Movie Guide 's Colin Jacobson said , " Given Homer 's utter devotion to Marge , it may seem off @-@ character for him to fall for Mindy , but the show makes it fit , as his obsession doesn 't come across as inconsistent . " He added the plot with Bart becoming a nerd is the " funnier one " of the two . Bill Gibron of DVD Talk called it a " jest fest loaded with insight into the human heart and hilarious over @-@ the @-@ top goofiness . " TV DVD Reviews 's Kay Daly called it the season 's finest episode with the " greatest foray into emotional resonance " . Matt Groening thought it was an amazing episode with " a lot of fun " in it . David Mirkin said Frank Mula 's script was great .

In a 2008 article , Entertainment Weekly named Pfeiffer 's role as Mindy one of the 16 best guest appearances on The Simpsons . She also appeared on AOL 's list of their top favorite guest stars on the show . Brett Buckalew of Metromix Indianapolis wrote that Pfeiffer " gives arguably the best celebrity guest @-@ vocal performance in series history . " Total Film 's Nathan Ditum ranked her performance as the 15th best guest appearance in the show 's history .