

= I Married Marge =

" I Married Marge " is the twelfth episode of The Simpsons ' third season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on December 26 , 1991 . In the episode , Marge worries that she may yet again be pregnant and drives to Dr. Hibbert 's office . While anxiously waiting , Homer begins to tell Bart , Lisa , and Maggie the story of how he and Marge got married and how Bart was born .

Written by Jeff Martin and directed by Jeffrey Lynch , " I Married Marge " was the second flashback episode of The Simpsons after season two 's " The Way We Was " . It features cultural references to The Empire Strikes Back , Charlie 's Angels , and Ms. Pac @-@ Man . The title of the episode is a play on the American television series I Married Joan . Since airing , " I Married Marge " has received mostly positive reviews from television critics . It acquired a Nielsen rating of 11 @. @ 9 and was the highest @-@ rated show on the Fox network the week it aired .

The episode was the first of three about the births of the Simpsons children , this one covering Bart 's birth , with Lisa 's covered in " Lisa 's First Word " in the fourth season , and Maggie 's covered in the sixth season episode " And Maggie Makes Three " . The episode also expands upon the family 's origins as a result of Marge falling pregnant with Bart , briefly referred to in " The Way We Was " , and introduces key moments , such as Bart 's conception at a Mini @-@ Golf course , which would ultimately become a major part of the series ' canon .

= = Plot = =

Marge and Homer worry that Marge may be pregnant again after a home pregnancy test gives inconclusive results , so Marge drives to Dr. Hibbert 's office to take another test . While waiting , Homer tells Bart , Lisa , and Maggie the story of how he and Marge got married , and Bart 's birth thereafter . In 1980 , Homer works at a miniature golf course and is dating Marge . One night , they make out inside of a golf course castle after seeing The Empire Strikes Back . A few days later , Marge feels sick and tells Homer she might be pregnant . He takes her to the office of Dr. Hibbert , who confirms that Marge is pregnant . Homer is less than thrilled over the announcement , but since he loves Marge he proposes to her and she accepts .

They decide to name their new baby Bart , as it is the first name they could think of that Homer did not think other children would make fun of . The two marry in a small wedding chapel across the state line . They spend their wedding night at Marge 's family 's house , sleeping on a couch in the living room , which irritates Marge 's mother , Jacqueline and her sisters Patty and Selma .

Homer 's wages at the miniature golf course are insufficient to pay for his new family so he attempts to get a job at the Springfield Nuclear Power Plant , but is unsuccessful . When Homer and Marge 's newly purchased baby supplies and Marge 's wedding ring are repossessed , Homer decides to leave and find a job . When Marge reads the letter Homer left behind explaining his actions , she is brought to tears . Homer gets a job at a " Gulp N ' Blow " taco restaurant , where Patty and Selma find him . Selma , seeing how unhappy her younger sister is without Homer , decides to tell Marge the truth in spite of Patty 's reluctance (due to her obvious hatred of Homer) . Marge finds Homer and convinces him to come back home with her . When Homer says he cannot provide much material wealth for Marge , she reminds him that anything he gives her is valuable , because it is from him .

Homer applies for a job at the power plant once more , this time marching into Mr. Burns 's office and telling him that he will be the perfect employee . Mr. Burns is so impressed that he hires Homer on the spot . When Homer returns to Marge 's house , he discovers from his mother @-@ in @-@ law that she has gone into labor and is already at the hospital . He quickly gets there and sees Marge with Selma and an angry Patty , who starts berating him . Fed up with her disrespect , Homer lashes out at Patty and angrily tells Patty (as well as the rest of the Bouvier family) to start showing him some respect for he has a job , a piece of news that Homer promptly tells Marge before she finally gives birth to Bart. After Homer finishes telling his flashback story , he admits to Bart that he received the greatest gift a man can have the day Bart was born . At that time , Marge arrives home

with the news that she is not pregnant . They are both overjoyed and high @-@ five .

= = Production = =

" I Married Marge " was written by Jeff Martin and directed by Jeffrey Lynch . It was the second flashback episode of The Simpsons and a sequel to the previous one , " The Way We Was " , which tells the story of how Homer and Marge met in high school . Executive producer Sam Simon was concerned that the writers were being " inefficient " with the episode ; he thought the three plots of Homer and Marge 's marriage , the birth of Bart , and Homer getting his job should have been extended into three episodes instead of one .

The staff were concerned over the animation of the characters ' eyes in the episode , as the pupils were larger than normal , making the characters look " stoned " , and the eyeballs were " too round " and large . The animation artists at the animation studio in South Korea , where much of the animation process takes place , had begun stenciling the eyes with a template , which according to Lynch resulted in " strangely round eyes which look a little too big sometimes and much too perfect . Which is very un @-@ Simpsons like . " Marge was designed with shorter hair in the flashback sequences to make her appear younger . Lynch thought it was nice to see Marge in a " younger , more attractive mode , and sort of watching her progress through pregnancy . "

= = Cultural references = =

The title of the episode is a reference to the American television series I Married Joan . Marge and Homer sing along to " You Light Up My Life " by Debby Boone in the car . When Marge is suspected to be pregnant , Bart wants to name the baby after rapper Kool Moe Dee , while Lisa wants to name her after Ariel , from The Little Mermaid . At the beginning of his story , Homer mentions the band Supertramp , and their popularity in the time period . While exiting the movie theater , Homer spoils the ending of The Empire Strikes Back for dozens of moviegoers awaiting the next show . He also compares Marge 's good looks to Princess Leia and her intelligence to Yoda , two characters from the film .

Homer 's encounter with the donut delivery man that delivers donuts to the power plant is a reference to a scene in the film Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory . Homer and his best friend Barney Gumble are watching Charlie 's Angels when Marge tells the news of her pregnancy . A poster of Farrah Fawcett , a cast member of Charlie 's Angels , hangs on the wall in Barney 's apartment . Dolly Parton 's 9 to 5 is heard when Homer looks for a new job . The sign outside the wedding chapel resembles Vegas Vic from the Pioneer Club in Las Vegas . When Homer returns to the power plant to apply for a job the second time , Mr. Burns is seen playing the arcade game Ms. Pac @-@ Man . The episode marks the first appearance of Burns 's assistant Smithers 's first name , Waylon , which comes from the puppeteer Wayland Flowers .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast on December 26 , 1991 , " I Married Marge " finished 27th in the ratings for the week of December 23 ? 29 , 1991 , with a Nielsen rating of 11 @. @ 9 , equivalent to approximately 11 million viewing households . It was the highest @-@ rated show on the Fox network that week . Marge 's voice actor , Julie Kavner , received a Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Voice @-@ Over Performance in 1992 for her performance in the episode .

Since airing , the episode has received mostly positive reviews from television critics . Pete Oliva of North Texas Daily praised the writers for providing back stories that are " believable " and do not feel " contrived or hastily thought through . " The authors of the book I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide , Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood , thought it was a " moving " episode with " plenty of great setpieces . " DVD Movie Guide 's Colin Jacobson described the episode as " sweet and funny " and a " nice piece of Simpsons history . " Jacobson went on to say that he enjoyed the flashback concept and that the episode develops the characters " nicely "

and gives the viewers " a good sense for the era in which it takes place . " Nate Meyers of Digitally Obsessed gave it a 5 / 5 rating , and highlighted the scenes with Marge 's sisters Patty and Selma , " barraging Homer with insults " , as the " funniest moments " of the episode . Meyers added : " The episode 's climax is a great moment for Homer and fans of the show . " Molly Griffin of The Observer said " I Married Marge " is one of the season three episode that turned the show into " the cultural force it is today . "

In his book Drawn to Television ? Prime @-@ time Animation from the Flintstones to Family Guy , Keith Booker wrote : " The episode details in a rather sentimental fashion the early struggles of the irresponsible Homer to support his new family [...] Such background episodes add an extra dimension to the portrayal of the animated Simpson family , making them seem oddly real and adding weight to their status as a family with a long history together . "