

= Home Sweet Homediddly @-@ Dum @-@ Doodily =

" Home Sweet Homediddly @-@ Dum @-@ Doodily " is the third episode of The Simpsons ' seventh season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on October 1 , 1995 . In the episode , the Simpson children are put in the custody of Ned and Maude Flanders after a series of misadventures . Homer and Marge have to attend a class for bad parents so that they can get their children back . Learning that none of the children have been baptized , Flanders sets up a baptism , but Homer and Marge are able to stop him just in time .

The episode was written by Jon Vitti and directed by Susie Dietter . The story was pitched by another writer on the show , George Meyer . It was the first episode on which writers Bill Oakley and Josh Weinstein served as show runners . The episode features cultural references to the 1965 film *Faster , Pussycat ! Kill ! Kill !* and Sonny & Cher 's song " I Got You Babe " . Since airing , the episode has received positive reviews from television critics . It acquired a Nielsen rating of 9 @.@ 0 , and was the fourth highest @-@ rated show on the Fox network the week it aired .

= = Plot = =

Homer books Spa treatments for himself and Marge . Despite Marge 's warning for them to clean up the house before they leave , Homer refuses and they leave their messy house in the care of Grandpa . When Bart is sent home from school with head lice and wearing a burlap sack , because he had his clothes burned to prevent contagion and Lisa all messed up and without shoes , because of a result of being continuously bullied at school , Homer and Marge are accused of being negligent parents . Two Child Protective Services agents arrive at their house and take Bart , Lisa , and Maggie to a foster home , which is right next door , at Ned Flanders 's house .

The kids have to get used to bedtime at seven o 'clock with the sunlight still out , and hours of Bible board games . Bart and Lisa hate the Flanders house , but Maggie enjoys being there as she gets more attention from the Flanders than she did with Homer . Meanwhile , Homer and Marge have to attend a special class for bad parents so that they can get their children back .

When Ned finds out that Bart and Lisa were not baptised , he takes it upon himself to give the kids an emergency baptism . Marge and Homer are declared decent parents and they quickly head for the Springfield River to stop Ned from baptising their children . Just as Ned is about to pour holy water on Bart , Homer shoves Bart over to prevent the water from hitting him . However the water hits Homer , apparently burning him and momentarily making him saintly until he goes back to his crude self . Maggie is unsure if she should return home to her family since Ned 's family has been more attentive to her . Then Marge arrives in time and resumes being a loving mother to her . With a new sense of family unity , the Simpsons happily head home .

= = Production = =

" Home Sweet Homediddly @-@ Dum @-@ Doodily " was the first episode to be made after Bill Oakley and Josh Weinstein became show runners of The Simpsons . They wanted to start the season with an episode centering on the Simpson family . The story was pitched by writer George Meyer at a story retreat . Story retreats were held twice a year at a hotel room close to the studio lot , where all the writers gathered to pitch their ideas . Seventeen episodes were pitched at this particular story retreat . Out of them all , Weinstein considered this episode to be the best , and he thought the pitch by Meyer was the " best " he had ever heard . Oakley and Weinstein selected former full @-@ time staff writer Jon Vitti to write the episode , wanting a " heavy hitter " , since it was going to start the seventh production season . Vitti retained in his script most of what Meyer pitched at the retreat .

The episode was directed by Susie Dietter . There is a statue portraying The Simpsons writer John Swartzwelder outside the courthouse in the episode . Oakley said that this was a mistake because he and Weinstein thought that Springfield was located in Swartzwelder County , incorrectly going off a montage in the season three episode " Dog of Death " . That montage depicts Springfield as being

located in Springfield County ; while Swartzwelder is the adjoining county . The female Child Protective Services agent , in appearance , is based on a teacher both Oakley and Weinstein had in high school that they " hated " . Cast member Hank Azaria 's voice for the character Cletus was off in this episode because , over the summer between seasons , Azaria and the producers had forgotten what Cletus sounds like .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast , the episode finished 53rd in the ratings for the week of September 25 to October 1 , 1995 , with a Nielsen rating of 9 @. @ 0 . The episode was the fourth highest @-@ rated show on the Fox network that week , following The X @-@ Files , Beverly Hills , 90210 and Melrose Place .

Since airing , the episode has received mostly positive reviews from television critics . DVD Movie Guide 's Colin Jacobson enjoyed the episode and said that " its best elements come from the amusing bizarreness of the Flanders home , but Homer and Marge ? s classes are also fun . Chalk this one up as season seven 's first great episode . " Jennifer Malkowski of DVD Verdict considered the best part of the episode to be when Marge tells Bart and Lisa that someday they will have to be adults and take care of themselves , just before Homer comes to Marge about a spider near his car keys . She concluded her review by giving the episode a grade of B + . 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 " one of the most disturbing episodes , as Bart and Lisa are dragged into the Flanders ' sinister lifestyle . " They thought the ending , when Ned tries to baptize the children , was " nail @-@ biting stuff " , and Maggie 's second first @-@ word was " a truly shocking moment " . The authors added : " It 's astonishing that anything this radical made it on to prime time television . The final moments are perhaps the most moving in the entire series , a wonderful affirmation of everything the series , and the Simpson family , are about . " Matt Groening , the creator of The Simpsons , thought the episode was " fantastic " and he called it one of his favorites . He particularly liked the ending which he thought was " sweet " .