

= And Maggie Makes Three =

" And Maggie Makes Three " is the thirteenth television episode of The Simpsons ' sixth season . It originally aired on Fox in the United States on January 22 , 1995 . In the episode , Lisa notices that there are no photos of Maggie in the family photo albums . This leads to a recount of Maggie 's birth : having settled all his debts , Homer quit his job at the nuclear power plant , and took his dream job at a bowling alley . However , when Maggie was born , his salary was not enough to support three children , so he had to return to his old job at the plant . He explains that all of Maggie 's pictures are at his work station to inspire him .

The episode was written by Jennifer Crittenden , and directed by Swinton O. Scott III . This was both Crittenden 's and Scott 's first episode on The Simpsons . It features cultural references to television shows such as The Mary Tyler Moore Show and Knight Rider . Since airing , the episode has received many positive reviews from fans and television critics , and has been called " a touching look at fatherhood " by Kevin Wong at PopMatters . It acquired a Nielsen rating of 10 @. @ 3 , and was the fourth highest rated show on Fox the week it aired .

= = Plot = =

While the family is browsing through the family photo album , Lisa notices that there are no baby pictures of Maggie at all . Homer explains by recounting the story of Maggie 's birth . In 1993 , Homer hated working at the Springfield Nuclear Power Plant , and had a dream of working at a bowling alley . After he received a paycheck that cleared him of all his debts , he happily quit his job at the power plant , and went to get a job at the local bowling alley owned by Barney Gumble 's uncle Al .

When Homer and Marge celebrated this development with sex , she became pregnant . In the meantime , Homer did an excellent job working at the bowling alley , and got treated well by the staff and customers as a result . Meanwhile , upon learning of her pregnancy , Marge feared that the news would end Homer 's new lifestyle and happiness , because it meant he could no longer support his family on his bowling alley salary . Marge kept her pregnancy a secret as long as she could , but Patty and Selma , eager to ruin Homer 's life , spread the news quickly around town . As a result , several people congratulated Homer , who was unaware of Marge 's pregnancy until a baby shower was given to Marge back at the Simpson residence .

Realizing the truth , Homer became very unhappy and completely unenthusiastic about it . On Marge 's advice , he attempted to get a raise on his salary to alleviate his problem , but Al stated that the alley can 't do enough to make that much money unless the business was expanded . Homer then attempted to expand the business by using a shotgun to attract more customers , but this failed . Due to the financial problems caused by the pregnancy , Homer was forced to quit his job at the bowling alley and go back to the power plant . However , Mr. Burns made Homer beg for his job back , and in an attempt to break what is left of Homer 's spirit as punishment for quitting his job earlier , he placed a large plaque in front of Homer 's desk reading : " Don 't forget : you 're here forever " . Homer was once again unhappy at his work , but as with all the Simpson children , when Maggie was born , Homer instantly fell in love with her . Back in the present , Bart and Lisa still do not understand what that has to do with Maggie 's photos . Homer merely mentions that they are in the place where he needs them the most . The scene then cuts to his workplace where all of the photos of Maggie are positioned on the plaque on the wall , which now reads : " Do it for her " .

= = Production = =

The episode was written by Jennifer Crittenden , and directed by Swinton O. Scott III . This was the first episode Scott directed for the show . Crittenden also made her debut as a writer for The Simpsons in this episode . Crittenden was taking a beginners ' writing program at 20th Century Fox when former The Simpsons showrunner David Mirkin hired her on the show . Crittenden 's only writing experience before that had been as an intern on the Late Show with David Letterman . 20th

Century Fox introduced Crittenden to Mirkin , and Mirkin read a script of hers that he liked . When Mirkin first talked to Crittenden , he thought she was a really nice woman who was very mature . Crittenden was only 23 years old at the time , but Mirkin liked her and he hired her .

After Homer quits his job at the power plant , he violently tosses his old boss Mr. Burns out of the car he is driving . Homer then drives across a wooden bridge and tosses a match onto it ? within a second the whole bridge is engulfed in flames . Mirkin came up with the joke , and said that the thing with animation is that you can stage almost anything and time it perfectly , something you would not be able to do in live action . He then said that the staff is always excited when the directors come in because they can , for example , make a bridge catch on fire instantly , just in the time of a single shot . As a live @-@ action director , Mirkin said he enjoys the amount of control they have in animation .

In the episode , Mr. Burns places a " de @-@ motivational plaque " in Homer 's station that says " Don 't forget : you 're here forever " . Homer then places photos of Maggie around the plaque to alter it into saying " Do it for her " , referring to Maggie . The Simpsons writer George Meyer , who enjoys writing jokes that involve anagrams or any other forms of word play , came up with the idea for this particular joke . The joke is also an homage to Al Jaffee 's Fold @-@ in features in the Mad magazine .

= = Cultural references = =

The couch gag is a reference to the James Bond gun barrel sequence . Homer 's flashback to saving the Nuclear Power Plant from freelance terrorists is a reference to Die Hard . Dr. Hibbert 's flashback hairstyle is modeled after Arsenio Hall 's . The family watches Knight Boat , a parody of Knight Rider . Homer spinning around with a bowling ball in his hand before throwing it into the air and exclaiming " I 'm gonna make it after all ! " is reminiscent of the opening of The Mary Tyler Moore Show where Mary throws her hat into the air .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast , " And Maggie Makes Three " finished 47th in the ratings for the week of January 16 to January 22 , 1995 , with a Nielsen rating of 10 @. @ 3 . The episode was the fourth highest rated show on the Fox network that week , beaten only by Melrose Place , Beverly Hills , 90210 and the Rock ' n ' Roll Skating Championship .

Since airing , the episode has received many positive reviews from fans and television critics . One @-@ time Simpsons writer and comedian Ricky Gervais named it his second favorite episode , and said : " Mr. Burns gives [ Homer ] this terrible plaque above his desk that says , ' Don 't forget : You 're here forever . ' It 's about how sometimes things don 't go the way you planned , which is pretty amazing in a cartoon . Homer then puts up all the pictures of Maggie he 's ever taken to strategically cover this horrible thing so it now reads , ' Do it for her . ' It gives me a lump in the throat thinking about it . " Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood , the authors of the book I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide , said : " A surprisingly traditional episode . The flashback to 1993 seems a bit odd , but this is a good example of a story that doesn 't overly rely on set pieces and confounded expectations for its success . " In a review of the sixth season , Joshua Klein of the Chicago Tribune cited " And Maggie Makes Three " , " Treehouse of Horror V " , " Homer Badman " and " Lisa 's Rival " among his favorite episodes of the season .

TV Squad 's Adam Finley said the episode " manages to be both incredibly funny and incredibly touching , both signs of a great Simpsons episode . " He added that " the episode has some great gags in it , but the emotion is very real , too . Homer is not thrilled with the idea of having a baby , and the episode does a wonderful job of showing the dark side of having another mouth to feed . " Colin Jacobson at DVD Movie Guide said in a review of the sixth season DVD : " Flashback episodes of The Simpsons usually work well , and [ this episode ] is no exception to that rule . Actually , at this point it ? s one of my favorites , but that ? s partially because of overexposure to some of the other episodes . In any case , this one has many hilarious moments ? such as the

scene that explains Homer 's hair loss . " Kevin Wong at PopMatters said the episode is " a touching look at fatherhood " .