

= Simpsons Tall Tales =

" Simpsons Tall Tales " is the twenty @-@ first episode and season finale of The Simpsons ' twelfth season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on May 20 , 2001 . In the episode , Homer refuses to pay a five dollar airport tax to fly to Delaware , which forces the family to ride in a livestock car of a train instead . There they meet a singing hobo who tells three tall tales which include Homer as Paul Bunyan , Lisa as Connie Appleseed (a female version of Johnny Appleseed) and Bart and Nelson as Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn respectively .

" Simpsons Tall Tales " was directed by Bob Anderson and written by John Frink , Don Payne , Bob Bendetson and Matt Selman . The idea for the episode was pitched while the series ' staff were coming up with story ideas for the twelfth season . The staff had noticed that viewers responded well to " Simpsons Bible Stories " , and decided to write another trilogy episode because of the warm response .

The singing hobo in the episode was voiced by Hank Azaria . He would originally be voiced by Jim Carrey , but he dropped out when he found out that he was too busy to record his lines . In its original broadcast , the episode was seen by approximately 7 @.@ 8 million viewers , finishing in 33rd place in the ratings the week it aired . Following its home video release , the episode received mixed reviews from critics .

= = Plot = =

After the Simpsons win a trip to Delaware , Homer refuses to pay a \$ 5 airport tax for his flight . After Homer violates the Anti @-@ Fist Shaking Law , the family jumps onto a freight train where they meet a singing hobo who tells them three stories .

= = = Paul Bunyan = = =

Homer portrays Paul Bunyan , a great burden on the local townspeople , as he crushes their houses and greedily eats all their food . Eventually , the townspeople drug him and drag him out of their town . Out of loneliness , Bunyan carves a block of stone from the mountains into a blue ox that he calls Babe , who is rendered alive by an electric shock . In his travels with Babe , Homer creates several landmarks . Bunyan later meets a young woman , (played by Marge) and though she is initially frightened of him , the two fall in love . When a meteor is soon to hit the town , the townspeople call Paul back to help them . Paul obliges and throws the meteor towards Chicago , starting the Great Fire there , but not before it hits him in the backside .

After the hobo has told this story , he asks them for a sponge bath as compensation . Disgusted , Homer is forced to oblige , as nobody else will do so , but the hobo does not mind anyone seeing his nakedness .

= = = Connie Appleseed = = =

The hobo 's second tall tale revolves around Lisa as Connie . Connie is part of a wagon train , and all of the travelers shoot and eat buffalo . Connie , who is against the practice , states " If you don 't stop this slaughter , you 'll wipe out the buffalo . " After which they all ridicule her she is worried that no one is eating a renewable source of food and finds some apples for the pioneers to eat , but they reject them . Eventually , she changes her last name to " Appleseed " , and leaves her family to journey across the United States and plant apple seeds wherever she goes . Meanwhile , the Simpsons change their surname to " Bufflekill " and they succeed in killing all the buffalo in the land . The travelers eventually starve , and just as they are about to cannibalize Homer , Connie returns and offers them apples instead .

= = = Tom and Huck = = =

The hobo 's third tale tells the story of Tom Sawyer , whom Bart portrays , and Huckleberry Finn , whom Nelson portrays . Tom is a rebellious trouble maker while Huck is a bully . Huck is caught holding hands with Becky (Lisa) and is forced to marry her by her father (Homer) . Huck dodges the marriage and goes on the run with Tom , leaving Missouri for Missoura . However , they are chased by townspeople led by Becky 's father and their families . Huck and Tom flee to a river boat , but are thrown into the Mississippi River and are caught by the townspeople . At their funeral , Tom and Huck are first revealed to not be in their caskets , seemingly watching the proceedings from the rafters which they have big smiles on their faces , until Reverend Lovejoy orders their bodies lowered into the caskets , revealing that Tom and Huck are in fact dead .

= = = Conclusion = = =

The family arrives in Delaware and disembarks the train , but the hobo reminds them that they owe him one more sponge bath as compensation . Homer promises to catch up with them in an hour and volunteers to stay behind to do the dirty work .

= = Production = =

On April 4 , 1999 , " Simpsons Bible Stories " aired in the United States . The episode , which contains three self @-@ contained segments in which the Simpsons play different characters from the Bible , was written after Fox requested a Bible @-@ themed episode that would air on Easter . The Simpsons ' staff enjoyed writing the episode and it was generally well received by viewers . When pitching stories for the twelfth season , the writers decided to make another episode based around three segments that are all related to a certain theme .

" Simpsons Tall Tales " was written by Matt Selman , John Frink , Don Payne , and Bob Bendetson . The idea for a trilogy episode based on tall tales was pitched by Frink and Payne , according to co @-@ executive producer Ian Maxtone @-@ Graham . While the episode 's introduction was written and conceived by Selman , the first segment was written by Frink and Payne . The second and third segments were written by Bendetson and Selman respectively .

Writing segments for " Simpsons Tall Tales " was much different from normal episodes ; for example , the writers only had one day to outline each segment 's plot , and three to four days to write the first draft of each script , which is much less time than the writers usually get for an episode . Still , Selman has said that working on the episode was " very fun " for the writers . While writing the third segment , Selman listened to Adventures of Huckleberry Finn , Tom Sawyer Abroad and Tom Sawyer , Detective on tape to " get some of the lingo " that Mark Twain used in his books . He found so many unusual words in the books that he compiled a " giant " list of them . " We wanted to cram in every single [jargon from the books] as we could " , Selman said in the episode 's DVD commentary .

" Simpsons Tall Tales " was directed by Bob Anderson and is one of his favorite episodes that he directed . Because the segments take place in different places and time periods , the animators had to create new designs for characters and backgrounds . Even though it took a lot of work , Anderson maintained that the episode was " fun to work on . " In a scene in the episode , Moe holds a giant pill that he made Homer sleep with .

At one point in the episode 's production , the pill would read " Roofie " , but it was eventually removed . Another scene that changed during production was the scene in which Homer uses Marge 's hair to clean him up for their date . After he takes Marge 's hair out of his ear , her hair would originally be covered with earwax , but it was removed when the animators looked over the episode 's storyboard . The second segment originally had many more shots of buffalo being shot , but some were changed so that the deaths were off @-@ camera .

The singing hobo was voiced by regular cast member Hank Azaria , who voices Moe and Comic Book Guy among other characters in the series . Originally , the part would be played by Canadian @-@ American actor and comedian Jim Carrey , who had asked for a role in an episode . Because Carrey was busy with other projects and did not have time to record any lines , the role was instead

given to Azaria , who Scully said did a " great job " . While most of the hobo 's songs were written by Frink , the song that the hobo sings at the beginning of the episode was written by executive producer and former showrunner Mike Reiss . The dialog between Homer and the hobo at the end of the episode was ad @-@ libbed by Azaria and Dan Castellaneta , who portrays Homer in the series .

Like many other trilogy episodes , " Simpsons Tall Tales " ended up very long and the staff were obliged to cut some scenes in order to fit with the program 's maximum running time . The scene in which Homer first meets Babe was also cut short ; originally , it would show Babe kicking Homer in the crotch after Homer says that he will " whip [Babe] from dawn to dusk . " A similar joke was later used in The Simpsons Movie . The last removed scene was from the episode 's third segment . It would show Lenny and Carl eating buffalo meat , while Carl speaks like a stereotypical Native American .

= = Cultural references = =

" Simpsons Tall Tales " has been described as a " skewed " retelling of old tales . The beginning of the episode shows the family winning a trip to Delaware . This is a reference to the end of " Behind the Laughter " , in which Homer is seen watching an episode of The Simpsons wherein the family is visiting Delaware .

The first segment is based on the mythological lumberjack Paul Bunyan , who carved Babe the Blue ox out of the Blue Mountains . The second segment shows Lisa as Connie Appleseed , a female version of the American pioneer nurseryman Johnny Appleseed who introduced apple trees to large parts of Ohio , Indiana , and Illinois . " Tom and Huck " features Bart as Tom Sawyer and Nelson as Huckleberry Finn , both of whom are characters in Mark Twain 's 1876 novel The Adventures of Tom Sawyer . Despite the episode 's title , only the first two segments are actually tall tales .

This is referenced in the episode , when Lisa says " That 's not tall tale , it 's a book by Mark Twain . " In the first segment , Paul Bunyan and Babe fight Rodan , a fictional Japanese mutated pterosaur introduced in the 1956 tokusatsu film Rodan . When showering Marge with stuffed animals , Bunyan accidentally drops a guard next to her . When noticing the guard , Bunyan tugs his collar in a similar way as American comedian Charles Nelson Reilly . In the third segment , Dr Hibbert can be heard singing the 1927 song " Ol ' Man River " .

= = Reception = =

In order to boost ratings , two earlier broadcast episodes (including Treehouse of Horror XI) were shown before the episode . In its original American broadcast on May 20 , 2001 , " Simpsons Tall Tales " received a 7 @. @ 6 rating , according to Nielsen Media Research , translating to approximately 7 @. @ 8 million viewers . The episode finished in 33rd place in the ratings for the week of May 14 @- @ 20 , 2001 . On August 18 , 2009 , the episode was released as part of a DVD set called The Simpsons : The Complete Twelfth Season . Mike Scully , Ian Maxtone @- @ Graham , John Frink , Don Payne , Carolyn Omine , Matt Selman , Tom Gammill , Max Pross , Bob Anderson and Joel H. Cohen participated in the audio commentary for the episode .

Since its home video release , " Simpsons Tall Tales " received mixed reviews from critics . In his review of The Simpsons : The Complete Twelfth Season , Colin Jacobson of DVD Movie Guide disliked the episode . He argued that the episode is similar to the season 10 episode " Simpsons Bible Stories " , in that they both " feel a little heavy on cutesy and low on comedic inspiration . " Although he found some parts of the episode amusing , he summarized it as overall being lackluster .

DVD Talk 's Casey Burchby described " Simpsons Tall Tales " as the season 's worst episode . As with most other trilogy episodes , " Simpsons Tall Tales " " did not work " for Burchby , who found that the gags were either boring or too far between .

He also argued that " Simpsons Tall Tales " and trilogy episodes in general are an excuse for the

series ' writers to not have to come up with new stories for the characters . " It 's understandable that after eleven years , a show might have trouble continuing to come up with original material for the same five characters , but the anthology episodes come across as rather transparent attempts to avoid that challenge " , he wrote . On the other hand , DVD Verdict 's Mac MacEntire argued that " Simpsons Tall Tales " is one of the season 's best episodes . He wrote that the episode is " filled with great gags " , including the hobo 's sponge bath and Bart and Nelson 's discussion about " backtacks " and " tackbacks " .