

= Some Enchanted Evening (The Simpsons) =

" Some Enchanted Evening " is the thirteenth episode of The Simpsons ' first season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on May 13 , 1990 . Although it was the first episode produced , it aired as the season finale due to significant animation problems . The episode is the last to feature the original opening sequence starting from " Bart the Genius " . After resolving a marital dilemma , Homer and Marge want to spend a night on the town so they need a babysitter to look after their children , so they hire Ms. Botz (voiced by former Laverne & Shirley star Penny Marshall) through a babysitting service . Ms. Botz is later revealed to be the " Babysitter Bandit " and after restraining the eldest children , she robs the family .

The episode features cultural references to such films as The Night of the Hunter and Psycho as well as a musical reference to A Star Is Born . It received mixed reception : some critics deemed it the best episode of the season while others regarded it as the weakest .

= = Plot = =

Marge is depressed that Homer takes her for granted . She calls Dr. Marvin Monroe 's radio call @-@ in therapy show and the doctor urges her to confront Homer , who hears the call on a radio at work , feels bad and wonders how to change the way Marge feels about him . He goes to Moe 's Tavern after work and , on Moe 's advice , brings home a single rose and a box of chocolates . Marge 's mood immediately softens , and Homer tells Marge he will take her to a dinner at a fancy restaurant , dancing , and spend a night at a motel .

Marge and Homer now need a babysitter and hire Ms. Botz through the local " Rubber Baby Buggy Bumper babysitting service " (however , they have to call themselves the " Samsons " , since their kids have a rather bad reputation with the babysitting service , and are effectively blacklisted) . On Marge 's advice , Ms. Botz puts Maggie to bed and has Bart and Lisa watch The Happy Little Elves . When Bart tries to suggest alternate viewing , Ms. Botz quickly puts him in his place because she dealt with troubled children like him before . After Ms. Botz leaves the room Bart tunes into a station airing America 's Most Armed and Dangerous (a parody of America 's Most Wanted) , which profiles a wanted burglar nicknamed " The Babysitter Bandit . " A mug shot of the suspect shows Bart and Lisa that Ms. Botz is " The Babysitter Bandit . " Ms. Botz enters the living room and realizes that her cover has been blown . Bart and Lisa try to hide , but she easily finds them , ties them up and forces them to watch The Happy Little Elves as she continues packing the family 's possessions into her suitcases . Maggie eventually wakes up and goes downstairs to discover that her siblings are tied up and watching TV . Maggie frees Bart and Lisa , and Bart is able to knock out Ms. Botz with a baseball bat .

After tying up Ms. Botz , the kids find all their telephones disabled (which Ms. Botz had done earlier) and go to a nearby payphone to alert the authorities . Meanwhile , Marge tries to call home to check up on the kids but because there is no answer , she and Homer decide to cancel their motel reservation and go home . They find Ms. Botz bound and gagged in front of the TV . Homer , thinking his children have gotten the best of another babysitter and unaware of her true identity , frees her and pays her handsomely . After advising Homer to keep both eyes on Bart , Ms. Botz makes a clean getaway , just seconds before the kids arrive with the police and news media to arrest her . As Bart tries to lead the police to the house , Homer attempts to berate him for his behavior towards Ms. Botz , only to be informed by a news reporter about Ms. Botz 's true identity and that he just freed her . Realizing his mistake , a humiliated Homer attempts to save face by claiming he fought Botz and she escaped , then warning her on camera never to show her face to him again . Later that night , Homer moans about his blunder on TV , but Marge cheers him up by saying that if he raised three children who can hogtie a perfect stranger , he must be doing something right .

= = Production = =

Even though this episode aired as the last episode of the first season , it was the first episode in production and was intended to be the first episode to air from the half @-@ hour show . The series is a spin @-@ off from The Tracey Ullman Show in which the family already appeared in a series of animated one @-@ minute shorts . The characters were already created , but had to be further developed in order to carry a half @-@ hour show . The episode was therefore meant as an introduction to the characters . The Simpsons creator Matt Groening and writer / producer Sam Simon (of such television series as Cheers) wrote the script for the episode . Both Groening and Simon are credited with developing the series along with executive producer James L. Brooks . The name of Ms. Botz was based on a real person that once babysat Matt Groening .

The episode was first directed by Kent Butterworth . Klasky @-@ Csupo , the animation studio that produced the earlier Simpsons shorts , was in charge of the animation , with one exception . During the years of producing the shorts , everything was created in @-@ house . As a budgetary consideration production was subcontracted to South Korean animation studio AKOM . While character and background layout was done in Los Angeles , inbetweening , coloring and filming is done by the overseas studio . A debacle erupted when this episode , the first to return from Korea , was screened in front of the production staff at the Gracie Films bungalow . Brooks ' initial reaction to the animation was " This is shit . " Afterwards the room almost cleared . A heated argument ensued between Brooks and Klasky @-@ Csupo animation studio head Gabor Csupo , who denied that there was anything wrong with the animation and suggested that the real problem was the quality of the show 's writing .

The producers felt the animation did not exhibit a distinct style envisioned for the show . At the time there were only a few choices for animation style . Usually , they would follow the style of either Disney , Warner Bros. , or Hanna @-@ Barbera . Disney and Warner Bros. cartoons had a universe that was bendy and the characters seemed to be made of rubber . The producers wanted a realistic environment in which the characters and objects could not do anything that was not possible in the real world . One example with the early animation being cartoonish was that the doors behaved liked rubber when slammed . The style of Hanna @-@ Barbera featured the use of cartoon sounds , which they did not want either .

The producers considered aborting the series if the next episode , " Bart the Genius " , turned out as this episode , but fortunately it turned out to suffer only a few , easily fixable problems . Afterwards , the producers entreated Fox to postpone the series premiere for several months . The premiere then switched to " Simpsons Roasting on an Open Fire " , which had to be aired in December , being a Christmas special . This ensured that more time could be spent fixing the animation problems and rewriting much of this episode . Directorial retakes were handled by David Silverman , who already had considerable experience directing the shorts . Silverman estimates that about 70 % of everything had to be redone . Most of these retakes consisted of changing the backgrounds . The result is an episode where the animation is uneven , because it shifts between the early animation and the retakes . It is still possible to see the doors slam like they were made of rubber . The Fox censors wanted to replace the sentence " the blue thing with the things " , which they believed to be too sexual . Due to the fledgling position of the Fox network , Jim Brooks had obtained an unusual contractual provision that ensured the network could not interfere with the creative process by providing show notes , so the producers simply ignored the censors .

The episode featured a few early character designs . Moe Szyslak has black hair in this episode , which was later changed to grey . Barney Gumble has yellow hair , which was later changed to brown in order to differentiate the character 's hair color from that of his skin . Because of the delayed airing , there are also a few continuity errors . Santa 's Little Helper for example does not appear in this episode , despite being introduced in " Simpsons Roasting on an Open Fire " . Hank Azaria was at the time credited as a guest star for portraying Moe Szyslak . In this episode Moe was originally voiced by Christopher Collins , but when Azaria came with his version , they decided to overdub Collins ' voice . Azaria became a regular cast member in the second season .

= = Cultural references = =

Ms. Botz 's pursuit of Bart into the cellar is reminiscent of Robert Mitchum 's pursuit of a young boy in the film *The Night of the Hunter* . Moe 's Tavern plays " *The Man That Got Away* " from the 1954 remake of *A Star Is Born* directed by George Cukor and starring Judy Garland and James Mason . Homer hums a song from *La Dolce Vita* (*Patricia*) as he shaves . The song also plays as Homer and Marge dance in the French restaurant . The babysitting service 's name , " *Rubber Baby Buggy Bumper* " is a line from one of the *Tom Slick* series of cartoons produced by Jay Ward .

= = Reception = =

In its original broadcast , " *Some Enchanted Evening* " finished 12th for the week in the Nielsen ratings with a rating of 15 @. @ 4 , being seen by approximately 14 @. @ 2 million homes . Since airing , the episode has received mixed reviews from television critics . The authors of the book *I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide* , Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood , said : " It 's quite a shock to discover that this confident , fully rounded episode was the first to be made . The perfect template . " Colin Jacobson at *DVD Movie Guide* said in a review that he " thought ? *Evening* ? was a reasonably good episode . " and added that " Still , it ? s an awkward piece , and not one I enjoyed a great deal . To be sure , ? *Evening* ? was generally entertaining , but it ? s nothing special . " In a DVD review of the first season , David B. Grelck gave the episode a rating of 1 @. @ 5 / 5 . Another DVD review from *The Digital Bits* calls the behind the scenes story more interesting than the actual episode .

According to Al Jean , viewers thought this episode was the best episode of the first season after the season ended . However in 2006 , *IGN.com* named " *The Crepes of Wrath* " the best episode of the first season . Penny Marshall , who played Ms. Botz , ranked on AOL 's list of their favorite 25 *Simpsons* guest stars .