

= Principal Charming =

" Principal Charming " is the fourteenth episode of The Simpsons ' second season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on February 14 , 1991 . In the episode , Marge 's sister Selma is looking for a husband , so Marge orders Homer to help her find one . Things go wrong , however , when Homer invites Principal Skinner over for dinner and Skinner instead falls for Selma 's twin sister Patty .

The episode was written by David M. Stern and directed by Mark Kirkland . The characters Hans Moleman , Groundskeeper Willie and Squeaky Voiced Teen make their first appearances on The Simpsons in the episode . " Principal Charming " features cultural references to film such as Vertigo , Gone with the Wind , and The Hunchback of Notre Dame . Since airing , the episode has received mostly positive reviews from television critics . It acquired a Nielsen rating of 14 @.@ 1 , and was the highest @-@ rated show on the Fox network the week it aired .

= = Plot = =

Selma realizes , after going to the wedding of a man that could have easily been hers if Patty had not intervened , that she needs to find a husband and begs Marge to help her . Marge enlists the help of Homer to seek one out ; however , Homer has trouble finding anyone suitable . Meanwhile , Bart pulls a big prank by pouring the fictional herbicide sodium tetrasulfate onto the grass of his school , spelling out his own name , and is caught when Skinner sees the mess . Homer meets with Principal Skinner about Bart 's behavior and , learning that Skinner is single , invites him home to dinner with Selma . Later that day , Skinner arrives for dinner , but instead of falling for Selma , he becomes instantly smitten with her sister , Patty after she yells at Homer for being the wrong twin .

Skinner asks an unwilling Patty out on a date and she tries to get out of it by refusing . However , as they are going home , Selma tells her that she needs to go on this date because she has not been with a man in 25 years and this would be her best chance to still have a family . On their first date , Patty does not seem impressed with Skinner until he yells at his former student for his lack of promptness . Soon after they go out on more dates , much to Selma 's chagrin and she realizes another decent man has just slipped past her .

Skinner enlists Bart 's help to get Patty to marry him , while Homer fixes a date between Selma and Barney , which Selma reluctantly accepts . However , Marge disapproves of Barney and demands Homer to find someone else suitable for her sister . Skinner takes Patty to the top of the bell tower to propose . Following Bart 's lead , he has written " Marry Me , Patty " in 40 @-@ foot letters using the sodium tetrasulfate that got Bart in trouble . Patty is flattered , but declines . She admits to Skinner that she shares a common bond with the emotional grief of her twin sister , which Skinner immediately understands . Patty appreciates Skinner 's understanding and his gentlemanly conduct , and if she ever did settle down with a man , she would want it to be with him . Rescuing Selma from her date with Barney , Patty takes her home .

Meanwhile , Skinner , who vows to win back his school from Bart 's control ( who was taking advantage of the fact that Skinner loves Patty and turned a blind eye from all of Bart 's recent vandalism ) , destroys all the grass on the school field with the sodium tetrasulfate , forcing Bart to replant the field seed by seed , much to Groundskeeper Willie 's pleasure .

= = Production = =

The episode was written by David M. Stern and directed by Mark Kirkland . Stern particularly liked writing episodes about Marge and her sisters Patty and Selma . Executive producer Mike Reiss said none of the staff members could relate on a personal level to the twins , but Stern " seemed to really hook in to them , so he did some great episodes featuring members of the Bouvier family . " Due to the episode 's romantic theme , the airdate was pushed back to Valentine 's Day on February 14 , 1991 . It was , however , ready to be aired several months earlier .

The characters Hans Moleman , Groundskeeper Willie and Squeaky Voiced Teen made their first

appearances on the show in "Principal Charming". Willie's role in the episode was to punish Bart by making him re @-@ sod the grass. Originally, Willie was just written as an angry janitor, and the fact that he was Scottish was added during a recording session. Dan Castellaneta was assigned to do the voice, but he did not know what voice to use. Sam Simon, who was directing at the time, told Castellaneta to use an accent. He first tried using a Spanish voice, which Simon felt was too clichéd. He then tried a "big dumb Swede", which was also rejected. For his third try, he used the voice of an angry Scotsman, which was deemed appropriate enough and was used in the episode. Originally thought by the directors to be a one @-@ shot appearance, Willie has since become a common recurring character. The show's creator Matt Groening later revealed that the character was based partially on Angus Crock, a kilt @-@ wearing chef from the sketch comedy show Second City Television, who was portrayed by Dave Thomas, and Jimmy Finlayson, the mustachioed Scottish actor who appeared in thirty @-@ three Laurel and Hardy films. In addition to Willie, Castellaneta also provided the voice of Squeaky Voiced Teen, whose voice is lifted from actor Richard Crenna's character Walter Denton in the sitcom Our Miss Brooks. Moleman's voice was also provided by Castellaneta. He was given the name Moleman by Groening, who thought the character looked like a mole.

= = Cultural references = =

The scene with Skinner climbing the bell tower to get a better look of where the sodium tetrasulfate smell is coming from is a reference to final scene of the 1958 film *Vertigo*. Moleman's drivers license says his name is Ralph Melish, a reference to the Monty Python sketch "The Adventures of Ralph Melish: Hot Dog and Knickers" from the 1973 album *The Monty Python Matching Tie and Handkerchief*. While searching for a man worthy of Selma, Homer uses a computer @-@ enhanced overlay on his vision similar to characters from the films *Westworld* and *The Terminator*. Skinner sings the song "Inchworm" by Danny Kaye as he rings the bell to Patty and Selma's apartment. Skinner carries Patty up the steps of the bell tower as Quasimodo did with Esmeralda in the 1939 film *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Selma sings Lisa a lullaby version of the song "Brandy" by Elliot Lurie. When Patty bids farewell to Skinner, she says, "Goodnight, sweet principal", a reference to "Goodnight, sweet prince" from *Hamlet*. When Skinner returns to school, he declares that "Tomorrow is another school day!", a reference to the line "Tomorrow is another day!" from the 1939 film *Gone with the Wind*.

= = Reception = =

In its original broadcast, "Principal Charming" finished thirty @-@ second in the ratings for the week of February 11 ? 17, 1991, with a Nielsen rating of 14 @. @ 1, equivalent to approximately thirteen million viewing households. It was the highest @-@ rated show on the Fox network that week.

Since airing, the episode has received mostly positive 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, wrote: "Good fun, with both Patty and Selma gaining a degree of humanity. Bart makes very good use of his new @-@ found freedom as Skinner's pseudo @-@ in @-@ law, much to the annoyance of Groundskeeper Willie, making his first appearance." DVD Movie Guide's Colin Jacobson wrote: "Many shows might have trouble concentrating on secondary characters like Skinner and Patty, but this episode worked nicely. Though the romantic tone could have become sappy, the program managed to stay on the right side of that equation, and it expanded the characters well." Doug Pratt, a DVD reviewer and Rolling Stone contributor, wrote that "the [episode] is heavily character orientated but poignantly comical". A member of the IGN staff wrote in a season two review: "There are some real winners to be found in the second season, and I was actually surprised at some of the episodes in the collection because I thought they were later in the series, like [...] 'Principal Charming', where Skinner falls for Patty."

Bill Goodykoontz of *The Arizona Republic* said "Principal Charming" was the episode that made it

" clear that The Simpsons wasn 't just a smart little cartoon but something much , much more . " The episode 's references to Gone with the Wind and Terminator were named the sixth and fifth greatest film references in the history of the show by Nathan Ditum of Total Film . Dawn Taylor of The DVD Journal thought the best line of the episode was Moe 's line to the depressed Homer : " Homer , lighten up . You 're making happy hour bitterly ironic . " A reviewer for DVD.net , on the other hand , thought that the best line was Skinner 's " Kiss me Patty , I don 't have cooties ! " .