

= Homer the Great =

" Homer the Great " is the twelfth television episode of The Simpsons ' sixth season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on January 8 , 1995 . In the episode , Homer discovers that Lenny and Carl are members of the ancient secret society known as the Stonecutters . Gaining membership through Grampa , Homer takes great pleasure in the society 's many privileges and events . During a celebratory dinner , he unwittingly destroys the Stonecutters ' " Sacred Parchment " . Homer is stripped of his membership until it is discovered that he is " The Chosen One " who will lead the Stonecutters to glory .

The episode was written by John Swartzwelder and directed by Jim Reardon . Patrick Stewart guest stars as " Number One " , the leader of the Springfield chapter of the Stonecutters . It features cultural references to Freemasonry and films such as Raiders of the Lost Ark and The Last Emperor . Since airing , the episode has received many positive reviews from fans and television critics and has been called " one of the better episodes of the series " by Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood in their book I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide . The song " We Do " was nominated for a Primetime Emmy Award for " Outstanding Music And Lyrics " .

= = Plot = =

Homer notices that his colleagues Lenny and Carl are enjoying inexplicable privileges such as free soft drinks , massage chairs , and great parking spots at the Springfield Nuclear Power Plant . He discovers they are part of an ancient secret society known as the Stonecutters . To join , one must either be the son of a Stonecutter or save the life of a Stonecutter . Homer complains about not being let in and reveals to Marge his past experience being excluded from clubs : when he was young , a group of children formed the " No Homers Club " and did not allow him to join , while letting in another boy named Homer Glumplet , claiming that the name allowed for one Homer . While extolling the Stonecutters at the dinner table , he discovers that his father is a member and is admitted .

After the painful and humiliating initiations required to join the Stonecutters , which is made up of many of the male characters on the show , Homer takes great pleasure in the society 's secret privileges , such as an underground byway bypassing Springfield 's traffic jams , drinking bouts and free rollerblades ( in order to get from the parking lot to his workplace faster ) . During a celebratory rib dinner with his fellow Stonecutters commemorating the society 's 1500th anniversary , he unwittingly uses the society 's Hallowed Sacred Parchment as a napkin , tissue and cotton swab , destroying it . He is stripped of his Stonecutter robes and is sentenced to walk home naked dragging the " Stone of Shame . " Before he leaves , however , it is discovered that Homer has a birthmark in the shape of the Stonecutter emblem , identifying him as the Chosen One who , it was foretold , would lead the Stonecutters to greatness . The " Stone of Shame " is instantly removed and replaced with the ( much larger and heavier ) " Stone of Triumph . "

Homer is crowned the new leader of the Stonecutters . Initially enjoying himself , Homer soon feels isolated by his power when the other members treat him differently due to his new position , and asks Lisa for advice . She suggests that he ask the Stonecutters to do volunteer work to help the community , which Homer agrees to , and has the Stonecutters use their resources to help with daycare and community upkeep . This angers the Stonecutters , who misinterpret Homer 's good intentions as going mad with power . They convene their World Council and consider killing Homer before he supposedly kills anyone for disobeying his commands . Instead , Moe suggests they form a new society , the Ancient Mystic Society of No Homers ( once again including a now adult Homer Glumplet ) .

Homer becomes despondent about losing his secret club and replaces every member with monkeys which he gets drunk and makes act out Civil War battles . Marge consoles him by telling him he is a member of a " very exclusive club " , the Simpson family , which she and Homer wear special rings to show loyalty . The family subjects him to some hazing and paddling .

## == Production ==

Although "Homer the Great" was written by John Swartzwelder, the story was suggested by executive producer David Mirkin. Mirkin did not have enough time to write the episode and asked Swartzwelder to do it. Mirkin came up with the idea while driving home from a rewrite early in the morning and listened to a religious radio station where they were talking about Freemasonry. Mirkin decided it would make a great episode, where everyone in Springfield was a member of a Masonic society and Homer was left on the outside and felt neglected.

The song "We Do" was not included in the original script and was suggested by Matt Groening. It was written by the writer's room, who threw in as many things that annoyed them as they possibly could. It was described as "one of the series' best musical numbers" by Colin Jacobson at DVD Movie Guide, and was later included in the clip show "All Singing, All Dancing".

The episode guest stars Patrick Stewart as Number One. Stewart said, "I think my appearance in The Simpsons and an appearance that I did on Sesame Street in praise of the letter B were perhaps the two most distinguished bits of work that I've done in the US." Mirkin has said that Patrick Stewart is "one of the best guest performances" because "he was so committed to [the] character."

## == Cultural references ==

The term "Stonecutters" and the organization's symbol are references to Freemasonry. The Stonecutters are in possession of the Ark of the Covenant and when they burn Homer's underwear in it, souls escape, which is a reference to Raiders of the Lost Ark. When crowned "The Chosen One", Homer, dressed in finery, enters through some curtains, a reference to the 1987 film The Last Emperor. The army of small monkeys may be a reference to the end of the film Aguirre, the Wrath of God.

## == Reception ==

In its original American broadcast, "Homer the Great" finished 38th in the ratings for the week of January 2 to January 8, 1995. The episode 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, called it "a brilliant crack at freemasonry, with all the secret signs, one @-@ upmanship, rituals and unusual membership rules. Add to this Patrick Stewart's amazing voice and you have one of the better episodes of the series." Patrick Enwright of MSNBC listed "Homer the Great" as his third favorite episode, calling it "as a whole [it] is (almost) unsurpassable." Dave Petruska of the Tucson Citizen listed "Homer the Great" as his favorite episode "because it is such a wonderful satire on fraternal organizations and because of Patrick Stewart's hilarious guest @-@ starring role as "Number One." Total Film's Nathan Ditum ranked Stewart's performance as the ninth best guest appearance in the show's history. TV Squad's Adam Finley said the episode "does a great job of satirizing Freemasons." Colin Jacobson at DVD Movie Guide said in a review of the sixth season DVD: "I think it peters out a bit as it progresses; the best moments show the influence of the Stonecutters, and the show drags a little toward the end. Nonetheless, it still offers a solid piece of work." In 2010, Michael Moran of The Times ranked the episode as the fifth best in the show's history.

John Swartzwelder and Alf Clausen were nominated for the Primetime Emmy Award for "Outstanding Music And Lyrics" for the song "We Do". It was later included in the album Songs in the Key of Springfield.