

= Simpson and Delilah =

" Simpson and Delilah " is the second episode of The Simpsons ' second season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on October 18 , 1990 . Homer uses the Springfield Nuclear Power Plant medical insurance plan to buy ' Dimoxinil ' , a miracle hair growth formula . Homer grows hair , and is given a promotion at work which allows him to hire a secretary named Karl . The episode was directed by Rich Moore and written by Jon Vitti , and guest starred Harvey Fierstein as Karl .

= = Plot = =

Homer sees an advertisement for Dimoxinil , a new " miracle breakthrough " for baldness . He visits a store which sells Dimoxinil , but at \$ 1000 it is far out of Homer 's price range . At work , Lenny suggests Homer pay for Dimoxinil through the Springfield Nuclear Power Plant medical insurance plan . The druggist yells that Dimoxinil is a frivolous product that is not covered by any medical insurance , but whispers to Homer that he will arrange an under @-@ the @-@ table trade . Homer successfully applies the drug , and after using it , he wakes up the next day to the thrill of having a full head of hair , and runs throughout the town blissfully . At work , Mr. Burns surveys the security monitors to find a new person to promote to an executive position . He sees Homer with hair and , mistaking him for a young go @-@ getter , chooses Homer for the job .

As he is about to become an executive , Homer tries to look for a good secretary , but all the applicants fail due to being seductive young women ? until Homer finds a man named Karl , who earnestly persuades Homer to tell himself that he deserves everything he has and is the finest creature God ever created . Homer eventually picks Karl , and they go shopping for a suit . At an executive board meeting , Homer is singled out by an impressed Burns to give a suggestion to increase worker productivity , and Homer meekly suggests that he give more tartar sauce in the lunch room , which Mr. Burns does . Following the increase in tartar sauce distribution , Mr. Burns is glad to hear that workplace safety is on the up @-@ and @-@ up and accidents are down . Smithers remarks that all the past accidents were either caused by Homer or believed to be traced to him . However , Burns tells Smithers to stop being negative and even accuses him of harboring jealousy towards Homer . Homer forgets his wedding anniversary , but Marge forgives him due to his new demanding schedule . Karl covers for Homer by hiring a singing telegram service to serenade Marge with " You Are So Beautiful " , which Marge loves .

Homer becomes successful and receives the honor of being given the key to the executive washroom . Smithers begins to feel jealous of Homer for his high standing with Mr. Burns and searches Homer 's file , finding the damaging information he seeks in the case of insurance fraud that gave Homer hair in the first place . Smithers gleefully prepares to fire Homer for the fraud , but Karl takes the blame for Homer and writes the \$ 1000 check to repay the company . Frustrated , Smithers is instead forced to fire Karl , who has sacrificed his own job to save Homer 's . Homer is deeply saddened to see Karl go after all Karl had done for him , including lending Homer his umbrella before finally leaving in the rain . Homer is invited to give a speech at the next meeting , and Smithers does his best to ruin Homer 's confidence . Homer is nervous about giving the speech without Karl , but reasons that as long as he has hair , everything will be fine .

Meanwhile , at home , Bart uses some of the Dimoxinil in a misguided attempt to grow a beard . When Homer enters and catches Bart , Bart accidentally drops the Dimoxinil , spilling it all onto the floor . By the next day , Homer has lost all his hair and , bald again , arrives at the meeting . His fears are alleviated when Karl appears with a pre @-@ written speech for him , but Homer is still convinced he is incapable of accomplishing anything without his hair . Karl impatiently tells Homer what he had been trying to teach him all along ? that all of Homer 's achievements had been the result of his own will and effort , not of his hair . Karl urges Homer to think higher of himself and give the speech , even kissing him on the lips to prove his point . Reassured , Homer presents a brilliant speech on the Japanese art of self @-@ management , but the audience is unable to take him seriously because he has no hair . Everyone leaves , leaving Homer greatly disappointed . Burns

angrily summons Homer , threatening to fire him , but reveals photographs of himself with strawberry curly hair in his younger years when girls flocked to him until he went bald , and as a fellow sufferer of male pattern baldness , sympathizes with Homer 's situation and merely demotes him back to his old position rather than terminating him .

At home later that night , Homer confesses to Marge he is afraid that his life has returned to a dead @-@ end job , that his kids will be disappointed because he can no longer buy the things for them he promised he would , and most of all that Marge will no longer love him as much . However , Marge reminds Homer that his safety inspector job has always brought food to the table , and that the kids will get over not being spoiled . Marge then reaffirms her love for Homer as they sing " You Are So Beautiful " together into the night .

= = Production = =

Homer 's hair product Dimoxinil is a spoof on a similar product , Minoxidil , which fascinated the writers . After growing hair , the production staff tried to give Homer a new hair design in every scene . The character Karl was played by openly gay actor Harvey Fierstein . Groening had originally intended to design Karl to look like Fierstein , who objected to the idea because he felt he did not " look like gay people , how they 're supposed to look . " Fierstein suggested that the character be made " blond , and tall , and gorgeous , and skinny , and [given] a beautiful place to live . "

The episode features a kiss between Homer and Karl , which occurred a decade prior to US television 's first real man @-@ on @-@ man kiss on Dawson 's Creek . In the episode , Karl is implied to be homosexual ; creator Matt Groening says that when people began asking " was he gay ? " the day after the episode aired , his response was " he 's whatever you want him to be . " However , Groening points out , " he does kiss Homer : He does give him a nice pat on the butt " which is " beyond [what] any other cartoon " had done at the time .

Karl was originally supposed to return for a cameo appearance in the season 14 episode " Three Gays of the Condo " . In the script , Homer was thrown out of the house by Marge , and encountered Karl . The purpose of the appearance was to introduce a gay couple that Homer would live with . Fierstein however felt that " the script was a lot of very clever gay jokes , and there just wasn 't that Simpsons twist " and turned the role down .

= = Cultural references = =

The scene in which Homer is running through town after he got his hair is a reference to the film It 's a Wonderful Life .

The scene in which Homer receives the key to the executive washroom is a reference to the movie Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter ? .

The title of the episode is a reference to Cecil B. DeMille 's Biblical film Samson and Delilah .

= = Reception = =

During the second season , The Simpsons aired on Fox on Thursdays at 8 PM , which was the same time as The Cosby Show , which aired on NBC . The supposed " Bill vs. Bart " rivalry had been heavily hyped by the media . The first airing of " Simpson and Delilah " on Fox had a 16 @.@ 2 rating and 25 % share , while The Cosby Show , which aired during the same timeslot had an 18 @.@ 5 rating . However , viewer @-@ wise , The Simpsons won with 29 @.@ 9 million viewers . It is one of the highest rated episodes of The Simpsons . " Bart Gets an F " , the season premiere and episode that aired the week before , averaged an 18 @.@ 4 Nielsen rating , had 29 % of the audience and was watched by an estimated 33 @.@ 6 million viewers .

This episode was placed twenty @-@ third on Entertainment Weekly 's top 25 The Simpsons episodes list . Harvey Fierstein is number two on TV Guide 's " All @-@ time Favorite Guest Voices . " The Daily Telegraph characterized the episode as one of " The 10 Best Simpsons TV Episodes .

" In a 2008 article , Entertainment Weekly named Harvey Fierstein 's role as Karl as one of the sixteen best guest appearances on The Simpsons . Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood , the authors of the book I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide , praised Fierstein 's performance , saying the episode was " brought to life by the superb character of Karl , helped no doubt by Harvey Fierstein 's unique vocal drawl . "