

LIFE ON THE FAST LANE

BY

JOHN SWARTZWELDER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. SIMPSONS' KITCHEN - EARLY MORNING

A pancake flies up into the frame and flips over. We follow it as it drops down, landing on the griddle. WE CUT WIDER and see Bart and Lisa busily making a special birthday breakfast for Marge. Lisa is watching the microwave intently. Bart is making pancakes and HUMMING a jaunty tune. Enthusiastically he spoons batter onto the griddle, dripping batter with every move. He then flips the flapjacks with a spatula, sending them into the air and missing a few.

BART

Whoops! Whoops! Oh whoops...Ewww...
whoops!

LISA (V.O.)

This is going to be the best birthday
breakfast Mom ever had.

Bart scoops a pancake from the griddle and puts it on the top of a huge stack of pancakes already made.

BART

Hey Lis, you think that's enough for
her?

LISA

Maybe one more.

The microwave's BELL sounds. Lisa opens the door and pulls out a microwave cake. She starts preparing the frosting for mixing.

LISA

I hope she likes the presents we got her.

BART

Well, I know she'll like mine. Who wouldn't like a bottle of real French perfume?

Bart reaches under the counter and produces a gallon jug of perfume which has a generic label "French Perfume" on it.

BART (CONT'D)

All of the way from Gay Paree. Four bucks, plus tax.

LISA

Well, I think she's gonna like my hand-made birthday card better.

BART

Big deal... dry macaroni... spray-paint, and glue. Whoopee!

Lisa produces a large macaroni mosaic that is extremely elaborate. It's a copy of "Whistler's Mother" with Marge in a rocking chair. It says, "I Love You Mom, By Lisa." Lisa begins mixing the frosting with an electric mixer.

BART

Dibs! First dibs, I get to lick the beaters.

Lisa turns off the mixer. Bart, unable to resist the frosting, grabs the still-whirling mixer and tries to lick it. His tongue gets caught.

BART

Hep! Hep! Lisa! My ungue! Hep -
stuck in the eater, hep!

INT. MASTER BEDROOM

Homer and Marge are sound asleep in bed. The door **CREAKS** open and Bart, Lisa and Maggie all tiptoe quietly in, carrying the breakfast tray laden with pancakes.

BART & LISA

(TOP OF THEIR LUNGS) Happy birthday!

HOMER

(SHRIEKS) Huh? Whuh? Whuh?

LISA

Here's your birthday breakfast!

Marge and Homer sit up in bed.

MARGE

(YAWNS; THEN TOUCHED) Well, isn't this
nice?

HOMER

It's my birthday?

LISA

No!

HOMER

My birthday? My birthday. This is my
birthday? What did I get? I love
birthdays.

MARGE

(A LITTLE COLDLY) No, Homer. It's mine.

BART

You don't even know your own wife's birthday?

HOMER

(PANIC SETTING IN RAPIDLY) Of course I know! Sure! It's my wife's birthday.

(TO MARGE) You really thought I forgot, didn't you?

BART

Oh right. What'd you get her, Dad?

LISA

Yeah, what'd you get?

Homer gets out of bed and begins hurriedly putting on his clothes.

HOMER

(STALLING) Huh... a very thoughtful gift. But it's a surprise.

(STRETCHING) You know it's such a beautiful morning, I think I'll take a little stroll around the block.

Homer sidles out the door. We hear SFX: RAPID FOOTSTEPS GOING DOWNSTAIRS AND OUT THE FRONT DOOR. CAR DOOR SLAM. ENGINE STARTING UP. CAR SCREECHES OUT ONTO THE ROAD, SPRAYING GRAVEL AS IT ROARS AWAY.

LISA

I think he forgot, Mom.

MARGE

Hmmm hmmm.

EXT. SPRINGFIELD MALL - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Homer's car **SQUEALS** to a stop, parking illegally at the mall's entrance. A number of **OLD PEOPLE** are getting their morning exercise walking around the mall. Homer gets out and rushes at the locked metal gate in front of the mall's main entrance.

HOMER

(IRRITABLY) Oh, no. Come on, come on!

Open up!

The mall's gate is finally opened by a **SECURITY GUARD**.

BLACK SECURITY GUARD

Good morning, consumers. The
Springfield Mall is now open for your
spending needs.

Homer, pushing aside all the old people, bolts inside.

INT. MALL - CONTINUOUS

Homer walks through the mall past several stores. First it's the "International House of Answering Machines."

HOMER

(SHAKING HIS HEAD) Ah... no.

CAMERA PANS with Homer to "The Jerky Hut".

HOMER (CONT'D)

Too salty...

CAMERA PANS with Homer to "The Ear Piercery".

HOMER (CONT'D)

Nah...

CAMERA PANS with Homer to "The Caramel Corn Warehouse".

HOMER (CONT'D)

Hmmm. Too corny...

CAMERA PANS with Homer to "Girdles 'N' Such, Fancy Lingerie". Homer looks in the window for a moment, MURMURS approval, then goes inside.

INT. GIRDLES 'N' SUCH, FANCY LINGERIE - CONTINUOUS

Homer holds up a short nightie that has three holes cut out of it in very important places. He looks at the pricetag which reads forty-five dollars.

HOMER (CONT'D)

(TO HIMSELF) Forty-five bucks. This thing wouldn't last three seconds with me in the room.

He holds up another nightie. It has one enormous hole in the center.

INT. SIMPSON LIVING ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Marge is on the phone with her sisters PATTY and SELMA.

MARGE

(INTO PHONE) Patty, he's out buying me something right now.

INTERCUT WITH:

PATTY AND SELMA

Patty is talking on the phone as Selma sits next to her on the couch, smoking and knitting.

PATTY

(INTO PHONE) Oh, Marge. He never gets you anything you want. He always gets something for himself.

SELMA

(TO PATTY) Like the tackle box.

PATTY

(INTO PHONE) Remember when he got you
the tackle box?

SELMA

(TO PATTY) And Connie Chung.

PATTY

(INTO PHONE) And when he "surprised"
you with the Connie Chung calendar? (TO
SELMA) Thank you, Selma.

BACK TO MARGE

MARGE

(INTO PHONE) I'm sure he doesn't do it
deliberately.

INT. THE JOCK SHOPPE

Homer is eyeing a sharp-looking sixteen-pound bowling ball
that is on sale.

HOMER

(APPRECIATELY) Ooooooh!

INT. SIMPSON LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Marge is still on the phone with her sisters.

MARGE

(INTO PHONE) Well Homer and I had a
lovely dining experience at Chez
Pierre... or the Rusty Barnacle is
nice...

PATTY

(INTO PHONE) No, no, no. We want to
take you someplace fun. The Singing
Sirloin.

MARGE

(INTO PHONE) Oh... the place where the
waiters sing.

SELMA

(INTO PHONE) Mmm-hmm.

INT. SIMPSON HOUSE - FOYER - A LITTLE LATER

Homer comes in the front door. He sees Marge drinking
coffee in the kitchen. He edges quickly to the hall
closet, trying to keep the large package he is carrying out
of sight.

MARGE

Homer?

HOMER

Be right there.

Homer pushes the package into the top of the closet with a
GRUNT, then joins Marge in the kitchen. He WHISTLES "The
Hall Of The Mountain King."

MARGE

Homer, we're having dinner tonight at
the Singing Sirloin.

HOMER

Ah, sounds delightful. Just you and me
and the balladeers.

MARGE

And the kids.

HOMER

Fair enough.

MARGE

... and my sisters.

HOMER

(ANNOYED GRUNT)

EXT. "THE SINGING SIRLOIN" - NIGHT

The marquee outside reads, "Home of Ballads and Salads".
The logo is a steak singing with a microphone a la a young Frank Sinatra.

INT. "THE SINGING SIRLOIN"

OLD MAN WINFIELD and OLD LADY WINFIELD are holding hands
and smiling as a quartet of WAITERS sing at their table.

1ST WAITER QUARTET

(SINGING) Oh, how we danced, on the
night we were wed...

CAMERA PANS TO ANOTHER TABLE

A HUSBAND and his very pregnant WIFE are sitting at the
table smiling shyly as a QUARTET begins singing to them.

2ND WAITER QUARTET

(SINGING) Oh you're having my baby...
what a lovely way to say how much I
love you.

CAMERA PANS TO ANOTHER TABLE

A MOROSE GUY with a three-day beard growth is scowling into
his beer as a QUARTET begins singing to him.

3RD WAITER QUARTET

(SINGING) Nearer my God to thee,
nearer to thee.

CAMERA PANS TO ANOTHER TABLE

A MIDDLE-AGED GROUP OF PEOPLE, dressed in black, sit at a table. The women are wearing black veils and wracked with grief.

CAMERA PANS TO SIMPSON TABLE

Marge, Homer, the kids, Patty and Selma are all seated around a large table. Marge is seated between her sisters and Homer is on the other side of the table. Dinner is over (except for Homer) and a birthday cake has been placed on the table. The kids are watching with tremendous repressed excitement as Marge opens the presents they have bought her. Lisa's "Whistler's Mother" portrait is on display. Marge is opening Bart's bottle of perfume.

MARGE

Oh, perfume.

Marge **SNIFFS** it. Her eyes water and her head **SNAPS** back.

MARGE

Whoa... hmmm. Thank you, Bart.

BART

You're welcome, Mom.

PATTY

(TO MARGE) Thirty-four years old.

SELMA

(LOW, TO MARGE) Time enough to start over with a new man.

PATTY

(LOW, TO MARGE) Someone who eats with his mouth shut.

Homer's mouth is full, food is spilling out of it.

HOMER

What's that, Patty?

PATTY

Nothing. Finish your steak. (LOW)
Look at him wolf down that gristle.

SELMA

(LOW) Hmmm, hmmm. It's an accident
waiting to happen.

PATTY

(LOW) Do you know the Heimlich
Manuever?

SELMA

(LOW) No.

PATTY

(LOW) Good. (LAUGHS)

Both CHUCKLE. Homer finishes eating.

LISA

(TO BART) I think she likes my present
better.

BART

Does not.

LISA

Does too.

BART

Does not.

LISA

Does too.

BART

Does not.

LISA

Then how comes she's not putting on any
of your perfume?

BART

Yeah. Hey, Mom. How come you're not
putting on any of my perfume?

MARGE

Uh... I'm saving it... for a special
occasion.

BART

What the hell are you talking about?
There's gallons of it.

HOMER

Bart!

MARGE

But this occasion is already so special
if we made it any more special, we
might end up making it less special.

BART

Gotcha. (TO LISA) I told you she
liked mine better.

LISA

Oh, brother.

HOMER

(AMIABLY) Hold on! Hold on now! Your
mother hasn't opened my present yet.

Homer signals to a quartet of waiters to come to the table. He holds the box out over the table towards Marge. As Marge reaches for it, the bowling ball inside falls through the bottom of the box and imbeds itself like a cannonball in the birthday cake. All the lighted candles but one are buried and snuffed out. Before anyone can say anything, we hear a **PITCHPIPE** and four **WAITERS** appear next to the table and begin **WARBLING** away happily.

4TH QUARTET OF WAITERS

(SINGING) Happy birthday to you!

Happy birthday to you! Happy 34th

birthday, Mrs. Homer Simpson... Happy

birthday to yooooo!

The whole table is silent. Homer removes the ball and starts wiping it off.

HOMER

(SHRIEK) Whoop! Don't worry. This frosting will come right off. Beauty, isn't she?

Marge is staring daggers at Homer.

MARGE

Well, it's hard for me to judge

(ANGRILY) since I've never bowled in my life.

HOMER

(PLAYFULLY) Well, if you don't want it, I know someone who does.

Marge **SNORTS**, blowing out the one remaining candle.

FADE TO BLACK

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. MARGE & HOMER'S BEDROOM - THAT NIGHT

Marge is lying in bed, immobile, staring at the ceiling.
Homer is sitting on the edge of the bed, talking to Marge.

HOMER

You always say we should talk. Well,
I'm trying to talk. I'm talking right
now, as a matter of fact. But I'm
going to stop in a second. So, please
say something back, Marge, please. I'm
going to stop talking ... now. Your
turn, please.

MARGE

You bought that bowling ball for you,
not for me.

HOMER

What? No...

MARGE

The holes were drilled for your
fingers.

HOMER

(DEFENSIVELY) I wanted to surprise
you. I couldn't very well chop your
hand off and bring it to the store,
could I?

MARGE

You never intended for me to use that ball.

HOMER

Well, if that's how you feel, I'll take it back.

MARGE

You can't take it back. You had your name engraved on it.

HOMER

So you'd know it's from me!

MARGE

(GRIM) Homer, I'm keeping the ball. For myself.

HOMER

(TAKEN ABACK) What? But you don't know how to bowl!... whoops.

MARGE

(GRIM) I'm keeping it and I'm going to use it. Thank you for the present, Homer.

Marge shuts off the light.

HOMER

(PAUSE) Well... you're welcome.

INT. BARNEY'S NEW BOWL-A-RAMA - THE NEXT AFTERNOON

Marge enters the alley carrying her bowling ball clumsily in her arms. She looks around in bewilderment

ent. **SFX: THUMPING OF BALLS, CLATTERING OF PINS.** There is a sign that says "Beginners Welcome." She walks up to the counter, where a sign says "We have a deal with the bank. They don't offer you fine value for your bowling dollar, and we don't accept checks." The GUY behind the counter is spraying the insides of bowling shoes. Marge catches his eye.

MARGE

(HOLDING UP BALL TENTATIVELY) Excuse
me... where do I throw this?

The counter guy jerks his thumb over his shoulder at the lanes.

COUNTER GUY

Over there.

MARGE

Thank you.

Marge starts to walk towards the lanes, raising the ball over her head with both hands, getting ready to heave it. The counter guy calls her back.

COUNTER GUY

Hey, wait a minute. You're gonna need
a lane.

MARGE

No, thanks. I'm just here out of
spite.

The counter guy points to a small sign that says "You Can't Bowl Without A Lane."

COUNTER GUY

Can't bowl without a lane.

MARGE

Hmmm. Well... all right.

The counter guy tears off a scoresheet and hands it to her.

COUNTER GUY

Okay, here you go. You keep score on
this. What size shoes you wear?

MARGE

(PRIMLY) Never you mind.

Counter guy points to a sign which reads, "You Can't Wear
Street Shoes On the Lanes."

COUNTER GUY

(PATIENTLY) Can't wear street shoes on
the lanes. You gotta wear bowling
shoes. What size please?

MARGE

(SOFTLY) Thirteen. Double A.

COUNTER GUY

Thirteen double A (WHISTLES).

MARGE

(MURMURS)

Counter guy hands her a pair of shoes, one larger than the
other.

COUNTER GUY

This is the closest I've got.

MARGE

(MURMURS)

COUNTER GUY

A nine and a fifteen.

MARGE

Thank you.

LANE 14

In the background a tall blond man, JACQUES gracefully rolls a strike. Marge is finishing putting on her shoes.

MARGE

(TO HERSELF) A little warm and moist.

(ANNOYED MURMUR).

She picks up her ball in both hands and steps up onto the lane. She walks up to the foul line, looks around with a "Is this right?" expression on her face, then -- with both hands -- tosses the ball into the air in the general direction of the pins. The ball THUDS onto the lane, bounces a couple of times and wobbles down the lane, knocking over the "7" pin. Marge looks at the lane next to hers as Jacques gets another strike and a small cluster of GROUPIES CHEER. Marge picks up her ball and tries again. The ball goes exactly to the same spot. She then enters her score on her scoresheet.

MARGE

(WRITING) One.

In the lane next to hers, Jacques throws another strike and the groupies CHEER. Marge watches as Jacques' OPPONENT hands over a small pile of money to Jacques and exits, head down.

JACQUES

(TO GROUPIES - THICK ACCENT) So -- one hundred and twenty pins later, I am the better man.

The contest over, the groupies begin to disperse and Jacques notices Marge.

MARGE

(TO HERSELF) I don't see what he's doing that's so different from what I'm doing.

Marge walks smartly up to the foul line, steps, and chucks the ball in the air, a little higher this time. It comes down in the gutter, bounces into Jacques' lane and knocks over his "7" pin.

MARGE

(EMBARRASSED) Oh!

Their eyes meet.

CLOSE-UP - JACQUES FACE

He is looking at her with a heavy-lidded lounge lizard expression.

NEW ANGLE

Jacques retrieves Marge's ball from the ball return and brings it back to her.

MARGE

I'm awfully sorry.

JACQUES

Entirely my fault. (PAUSE) It is nice

to meet you... (LOOKS AT HER BALL)...

Homer.

She takes the ball from him.

MARGE

(FLUSTERED) Oh, no no. Homer is my...

ball's name. I'm Marge.

Jacques places his hand on hers, which is on the illuminated scoring table, and runs the tips of his fingers over it.

MARGE

(SLIGHT SURPRISED GASP)

We see their hands project on the overhead scoreboard.

JACQUES

Your fingers are so slender, so
feminine. They are far too tapered for
the ball you are using. You need
something lighter, more delicate.
Here, use my ball.

He holds out his ball to her. She backs away a little.

MARGE

No... no thank you, Mr... uh... (LOOKS
AT THE NAME ON HIS BALL)... Brunswick.

JACQUES

Call me Jacques.

MARGE

Jacques.

JACQUES

Marge.

MARGE

Hmmm. I'll just use my ball.

JACQUES

(PHILOSOPHICALLY) As you wish. Many
people have senseless attachments to
heavy, clumsy things such as this
"Homer" of yours.

His face moves uncomfortably close to hers. His eyelids
and lower lip droop senuously.

MARGE

Hmmm.

JACQUES

May I ask you a bold question?

MARGE

Sure.

JACQUES

You've never bowled before?

MARGE

Never.

JACQUES

No?

MARGE

No.

JACQUES

Then I will teach you.

MARGE

Oh, I don't want to trouble you.

JACQUES

Not at all. I am a professional. Roll the ball for me, Marge. Let me see your form.

MARGE

All right. But I'm not very good.

Marge picks up her ball and heaves it. It follows the same trajectory, and knocks over the "7" pin.

MARGE (CONT'D)

I can hit that one pin all right. But the rest of them don't even wobble.

JACQUES

I can help you, Marge. Pick up your
ball. Pick up Homer. Pick him up.

MARGE

Ohhh, Homer!

Marge picks up her ball. Jacques lines her body up with
the pins.

She slumps. He picks her up like a ballet dancer lifting a
ballerina. Marge **SQUEAKS** with surprise. He sets her down
almost in the next lane.

JACQUES

Now throw!

MARGE

But...

JACQUES

Throw, damn you!

Marge heaves the ball. It **THUDS** on the lane. As a result
of her new starting point, it knocks down all the remaining
pins.

MARGE

(GASPS) Why, you're a very good
teacher.

Marge's face is flushed with triumph. A few strands of her
hair are dangling in front of her eyes. She brushes them
aside, girlishly. They flop back. Jacques reaches up,
suavely licks the entire palm of his hand, and pastes the
hairs back into place.

JACQUES

Yes, I am a very good teacher and I can teach you everything. I can tell you what the little arrows on the wood floor mean. Which frame is the beer frame. I bet you don't know how to make a 5-7-10 split, do you, Marge?

MARGE

No.

JACQUES

But first of all you yell.. the eight pin is a cop.

MARGE

(LAUGHING)

JACQUES

Let it out, Marge. Laugh loud. Laugh out loud. You'll lose weight.

MARGE

Oh, that's very funny.

JACQUES

Feels good.

MARGE

Oh dear. I didn't realize there was so much to this game. What do you charge for lessons?

JACQUES

(LIKE CHARLES BOYER) Twenty-five
dollars.

MARGE

Twenty-five dollars!

JACQUES

It's a forty-dollar value.

MARGE

Oh. Well... all right. When do we
start?

JACQUES

We have already begun.

INT. SIMPSON KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Homer and the kids are sitting at the table. Homer sets a
pizza carton down and opens it.

HOMER

(NERVOUSLY) Now this is living, eh
kids? Hot pizza... the food of kings.

LISA

Don't be scared, Dad. It's not so hard
taking care of us.

HOMER

(LAUGHS) Lisa. I'm not scared. I
think it's a great chance to spend some
time with you kids. Your mother always
gets to be alone with you and now it's
my turn. (LONG BEAT AS THEY EAT) Does
the time always drag like this?

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Jacques is crouching on the alley, feeling it with his hands in a highly sensuous manner. Marge is watching him.

JACQUES

(SENSUOUSLY) First you must get to know your lane. Feel the slickness. Feel the satiny finish. Caress it. Experience it. You could eat off of it.

MARGE

Hmmm.

JACQUES

You hungry?

MARGE

Yes.

JACQUES

(LOUDLY) Four onion rings.

INT. SIMPSON KITCHEN - A LITTLE LATER

Homer and the kids are still at the table. The pizza carton is now empty.

LISA

Mmm! Delicioso!

BART

(LICKING HIS FINGERS) My compliments to the delivery boy.

HOMER

Okay. We've eaten and eaten well. Now
What else do we have to do? Well,
let's check the list your Mom left us.

Homer looks at the list.

HOMER (CONT'D)

Eat. Hmmm hmmm.

Homer checks it off.

HOMER (CONT'D)

Ooh. Clean up. Now don't worry,
everybody. This'll be a breeze if we
all pitch in.

Homer closes the pizza carton and hands it to Bart. The
table is now perfectly clean. Bart hands it to Lisa. Lisa
hands it to Maggie, who is in her highchair. Maggie hands
it to Lisa who hands it to Homer. Homer hands it to Bart.
Bart throws it in the garbage.

HOMER (CONT'D)

All right, we're clean. Now we'll...

(CHECKS LIST) put Maggie to bed.

INT. MAGGIE'S BEDROOM

Maggie is in her crib. Homer, Bart and Lisa sing a
lullabye.

HOMER/BART/LISA

(SINGING SWEETLY) "Lullabye and good
night, go to bed and sleep tight, close
your eyes, start to yawn, pleasant
dreams until the dawn."

HOMER

(YAWNING)

Maggie drifts off to sleep, but **SUCKS** her pacifier occasionally.

EXT. BOWLING ALLEY - PARKING LOT

Jacques is walking Marge to her car. The moon is shining down.

JACQUES

I believe everyone has the perfect
bowling form locked up inside of them.
I will devote my life to finding yours.
That is my vow.

MARGE

For twenty-five dollars?

JACQUES

I told you it was a forty-dollar value.

MARGE

Hmmm.

JACQUES

By the way. A vow for under fifty is a
fantastic deal.

MARGE

(LAUGHS)

INT. SIMPSON LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Homer is asleep in bed, **SNORING** loudly. Marge enters from the bathroom in her nightgown, looks at him guiltily and climbs into bed.

MARGE

Homer... Homer.

HOMER

(HALF ASLEEP) Ahhh... ahhh... Oh, how
was bowling?

MARGE

It's a very challenging hobby.

HOMER

(CHUCKLES SLEEPILY) Sport, dear, it's
a sport, you silly thing.

MARGE

Mmm-hmm. But I think I'll do much
better tomorrow night.

HOMER

You're going back?

MARGE

Well sure, if you don't mind taking
care of the kids, again?

HOMER

(CONFUSED) Oh no, I don't mind.

MARGE

Goodnight, Homer.

HOMER

Night.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - NEXT NIGHT

Marge is looking a little more proficient now. She **GRUNTS** as she bowls and **MURMURS** excitedly as she knocks over nine pins. As she waits for her ball, Jacques is next to her. He grabs her hands and brings them over the automatic hand-dryer. Their eyes meet. His are smouldering. Hers are confused. We begin a **MONTAGE** of sensuous, slow-motion **EXTREME CLOSEUPS**, reminiscent of "9-1/2 Weeks."

- A. Marge's hand held by Jacques underneath the automatic hand-dryer.
- B. Jacques opening the zipper on his bowling bag, revealing the shiny ball inside.
- C. Jacques putting a glove on to his hand, finally pulling it tight with his teeth.
- D. Jacques hand removing Marge's street shoes, only to re-enter the frame and put on her bowling shoes.
- E. Marge's hand in Jacques' as he shows her how to grip the ball.
- F. Marge's hand in Jacques' as he shows her how to throw the ball.
- G. Marge's hand in Jacques' as she holds a pencil. He is showing her how to score.
- H. Marge and Jacques exchange a smoldering look.
- I. A lone pin wobbles back and forth and finally topples.
- J. A bowling glove which is delicate and fairly expensive-looking. It has "For Marge" embroidered on it.

JACQUES (O.S.)

It is for you.

CUT WIDE

We PULL OUT to include Marge and Jacques.

MARGE

Oh Jacques! It fits. You got it in my size and it has my name on it. It's really for me.

JACQUES

Seventeen fifty. Enjoy it my darling.

INT. SIMPSON FOYER - MORNING

We hear the school bus DRIVE UP and the HONK of a horn.

BART (O.S.)

Uh oh. School bus.

Bart enters from upstairs. Lisa enters from the living room and Marge enters from the kitchen carrying two huge lunchbags that have French bread baguettes, fruit and a donut box sticking out of each. Bart's also includes a comic book and Lisa's has a toy pony.

MARGE

Here you go, kids. Special lunches.

Lots of good things for growing bodies
and some treats just for fun.

She hands them the bags, which are very heavy.

BART

Whoa. Aye carumba!

LISA

Are you going bowling again tonight,
Mom?

MARGE

Well yes I am, as a matter of fact.

Here's more treats. But don't worry,
your Dad will take care of dinner.

BART

Mmm. Wednesday -- hoagie night.

Marge hugs Lisa too hard and kisses her too long.

MARGE (CONT'D)

Goodbye, Lisa. My darling little Lisa.

Marge hugs Bart too hard and kisses him too long.

MARGE (CONT'D)

Goodbye, Bart. My special little guy.

Lisa and Bart exit.

INT. SCHOOL BUS

Lisa and Bart sit next to each other holding their huge sacks between their knees. Bart is eating donuts and reading a comic book.

BART

Great lunches, eh Lis?

LISA

Oh, Bart, don't you see? This is what psychologists call over-compensation. Mom is racked with guilt because her marriage is failing.

BART

Hey, don't rock the boat, man. Whatever it is, we're making out like bandits.

LISA

Bart, I read about what happens to kids whose parents no longer love and cherish each other. They go through eight separate stages. Right now, I'm in Stage 3, fear. You're in Stage 2, denial.

BART

No I'm not.

LISA

Yes you are.

BART

No I'm not.

LISA

Yes you are.

BART

No I'm not.

LISA

Yes you are.

Bart leans in eye-to-eye with Lisa, backing her against the bus window.

BART

Am not, am not, am not!

LISA

(A LITTLE FRIGHTENED) I stand
corrected.

INT. MARGE & HOMER'S BEDROOM - EARLY EVENING

Homer is taking off his shirt. He starts to turn away, but stops when he sees something sticking out of one of the drawers. He pulls the object out and looks at it. It is a delicately made bowling glove. He stares at it stupidly for a moment, reads it, then carefully puts it back. After a moment, Marge comes in and begins getting ready to go out. Homer watches her. Neither says anything. Finally, Homer speaks.

HOMER

Are you going bowling again tonight?

MARGE

(NOT LOOKING AT HIM) Yes.

HOMER

(HESITATES. THEN...) At the bowling
alley?

MARGE

Yes.

HOMER

Well... (GIVING IT UP)... have a good
time.

MARGE

Okay.

She opens the drawer and takes out her bowling glove. She puts it inside her purse, **CLICKING** the clasp shut, then exits. Homer watches her go and sits slumped with his head on his chest. After a beat, Bart enters, very cheery, with baseball gloves and a ball.

BART

(CHEERY) Hey, Dad. What do you say we
toss the ol' apple around, huh? Sound
like fun?

HOMER

(EXHAUSTED) Son, I don't know if I can
lift my head, let alone a ball.

BART

Aw, come on, Dad. Get the lead out.

He takes Homer by the arm and starts to lead him out.

EXT. YARD - EARLY EVENING

Homer is standing like a zombie, his arms hanging at his side. Lisa sits on the steps watching them.

BART

Simpson checks the runner on first.

He's cool. He's fine. Here's the
windup and... here's the pitch.

Bart throws the ball. Homer doesn't move and the ball HITS him squarely on the forehead. He drops to the ground and lies there, staring straight up.

BART

Dad, you didn't even say ouch.

HOMER

Oh. Sorry... ouch!

Bart runs over to where Lisa is sitting.

BART

Lisa, Lisa! I think you're right about Dad. Something's very, very wrong here.

LISA

Frightened, Bart? Welcome to Stage 3: Fear.

BART

Well come on. We gotta do something, Man.

LISA

Sorry, Bart. I'd love to help you but I'm mired in Stage 5, self-pity.

Bart goes back to Homer.

BART

Look, Dad. I don't know what's going on, but once you gave me some advice that might help.

HOMER

I gave you advice? Get outta here.

BART

Yeah. You did! You told me when something's bothering you, and you're too damn stupid to know what to do, just keep your fool mouth shut. At least that way you won't make things worse.

HOMER

Hmmm. Good advice.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - NIGHT

With romantic MUSIC in the b.g., Marge and Jacques sweep majestically up to adjacent foul lines and gracefully roll strike after strike. The rhythmic THUDDING and SCATTERING OF PINS punctuates the music perfectly.

EXT. SIMPSON HOUSE - LATE THAT NIGHT

Jacques and Marge drive up in Jacques' convertible. Marge's hair is blown straight back out over the trunk. Jacques turns off the engine.

JACQUES

(HUMMING) Here we are.

MARGE

You didn't have to drop me off.

JACQUES

But I wanted to, Marge. Do you know how beautiful you look in the moonlight?

CUT WIDE

There are three wide craters in the moon, making it look somewhat like a bowling ball.

MARGE

Oh Jacques, I'm a married woman.

JACQUES

(TORTURED) I know, I know. My mind
says stop, but my heart and my hips cry
proceed.

MARGE

(MURMURS)

JACQUES

Marge darling, I want to see you
tomorrow. Not at Barney's Bowl-A-Rama.
Away from the thunderous folly of
clattering pins. Meet me tomorrow for
brunch.

MARGE

What's brunch?

JACQUES

You'd love it. It's not quite
breakfast, it's not quite lunch, but it
comes with a slice of cantalope at the
end. You don't get completely what you
would at breakfast, but you get a good
meal.

MARGE

(MURMURS) I don't think so.

JACQUES

Marge darling, there are ten pins in my
heart. You've knocked over eight.
Won't you please pick up that spare?

MARGE

(A-FLUTTER) Oh! Well, all right.

INT. MARGE & HOMER'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The bathroom door opens and Marge slips into bed. Homer's
eyes slowly open.

HOMER

Marge?

MARGE

What, Homer?

HOMER

(DEFEATED) Nothing.

Homer's eyes remain open as Marge goes to sleep.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. COFFEE SHOP - BRUNCHTIME

Marge and Jacques are seated opposite each other at a corner table in the coffee shop. Marge is nervous, afraid to be seen.

JACQUES

Mimosa?

MARGE

I'm a married woman. Please don't call
me that.

Jacque, thinking she is joking, LAUGHS. Marge, not knowing exactly why, LAUGHS too.

JACQUES

(LAUGHING) No, no, no, no. Mimosa is
the name of the drink. It is orange
juice and champagne. You're so
wonderful that you thought it was
something offensive.

MARGE

Oh. Well, thank you.

Suddenly they are joined by HELEN LOVEJOY, a cheerful Jane Wyatt-kind of person.

HELEN

Marge! Marge Simpson! You remember me, don't you? I'm Helen Lovejoy, the gossip wife of the minister.

MARGE

Oh... yes, hello, Helen.

HELEN

Well, I had just finished eating and was about to leave when I looked over this way and said to myself, "Why, isn't that Marge Simpson over there? Having brunch with a man who isn't her husband?" And I just had to come over and say hello.

MARGE

We're... uh...

HELEN

Oh, don't squirm on my account.

JACQUES

I am giving her a bowling lesson, thank you.

Jacque begins moving salt and pepper shakers to certain points on the table.

JACQUES (CONT'D)

Now, Marge. The pins on the 3-7-10 split would be here. We'll make this little piece of food the ball. The ball's bigger, you know that...

MARGE

Hmmm hmmm.

JACQUES

but for food, this is a good ball.

HELEN

Well, I just wanted to stop by and say
hello and see if I could dig up a
little good-natured dirt. Bye bye.
See you in church on Sunday, Marge.

MARGE

Goodbye, Helen.

JACQUES

Goodbye, Helen.

Helen exits.

JACQUES

You have a lovely friend, there. Let's
hope something runs over her.

MARGE

(LAUGHS)

JACQUES

Your laughter is like music to me. But
if you laugh at what I say next, I will
die, for I am about to say something
very serious... perhaps shocking.
Marge, my darling, I want you to meet
with me again.

MARGE

That doesn't shock me.

JACQUES

Away from prying eyes. Away from the
Helen's of the world. At my apartment,
the Fiesta Terrace.

Marge instantly faints. She slides off her chair and lies flat on her back on the floor.

DISSOLVE TO:

DREAM SEQUENCE

MARGE POV

Marge is standing in front of a door. It opens and Jacques is standing there, dressed in a tuxedo that has his name written in gold thread on his left pocket.

JACQUES

(LIKE "THE CONTINENTAL") I've been
waiting for you. Come in, my
captivating one.

She enters. Jacques' apartment is an Art Deco extravaganza. There is romantic DANCE MUSIC playing.

JACQUES

May I have this dance?

MARGE (O.S.)

Sure.

They start to dance.

CLOSE UP - THEIR FEET

They are wearing bowling shoes.

BACK TO WIDE SHOT

He dips her towards a trophy case.

MARGE

You certainly have a lot of bowling trophies.

JACQUES

(LAUGHING) Oh, I like you so much. They're not for bowling. You are so naive. They're for lovemaking.

MARGE

Really!

They start to spin again. He dips her towards the bar, where ten bottles of champagne are arranged like bowling pins. The front bottle is open.

JACQUES

Yes. Champagne?

MARGE

Please.

JACQUES

There my darling.

He grabs the open bottle and quickly pours some down her throat.

MARGE (CONT'D)

Thank you.

They start to spin again. Jacques leans closer as they dance.

JACQUES

What cosmic force brought us together, Marge?

MARGE

Destiny?

JACQUES

Yes... Some divine pin-spotter must
have placed us side by side.

MARGE

Like two fragile bowling pins...

JACQUES

Standing bravely...

MARGE

Until inevitably...

JACQUES

We must topple.

He reaches offstage with his foot and pulls in a satin
chaise. As they sink into it.

MATCH DISSOLVE TO

INT. COFFEE SHOP

Jacques is bending down.

JACQUES

Marge, speak to me.

MARGE

Is Thursday okay?

JACQUES

It's okay indeed.

INT. SIMPSON KITCHEN - THURSDAY MORNING

Marge is making sandwiches and putting them into Bart and
Lisa's lunchboxes. Homer is about to leave for work. He's
halfway out the door. He hesitates, then stops and faces
Marge.

HOMER

(STRUGGLING FOR THE RIGHT WORDS)

Marge, may I speak to you?

MARGE

Sure.

HOMER

You know I've been thinking... everyone makes peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, but usually the jelly drips out over the sides and a guy's hands get all sticky. But your jelly stays right in the middle where it's supposed to. I don't know how you do it. You've just got a gift, I guess. I've always thought so. I just never mentioned it. But it's time you knew how I feel. I don't believe in keeping feelings bottled up.

HOMER

(BROKENLY)... goodbye, my wife.

He leaves, slowly closing the door behind him.

MARGE

Goodbye, Homer.

INT. SIMPSON CAR - LATER THAT DAY

Marge is driving towards Jacques' apartment. She is nervous and perspiring.

EXT. FIESTA TERRACE - ESTABLISHING - CONTINUOUS

There is a sign out front reading "Young Singles Living."

INT. JACQUES' APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Jacque is looking at himself in the bathroom mirror. He is combing his hair in different styles, trying to find just the right one. On the counter are enough fragrance and grooming products to stock a Thrifty Jr.

JACQUES

To the most beautiful moment in life...
better than the deed, better than the
memory... the moment of anticipation.

He slaps on some cologne.

JACQUES (CONT'D)

Oh Jacques, you handsome devil. Look
at you. You are really going to strike
out tonight.

He tweezes a nose hair in dramatic fashion.

INT. LUNCHROOM AT THE POWER PLANT - CONTINUOUS

Homer is sitting at a crowded table staring at his untouched sandwich. LENNY is sitting beside him.

LENNY

Aren't you hungry, Homer?

HOMER

Starving.

LENNY

Then why aren't you eating your
sandwich?

HOMER

How can I eat it? She made it. It's
all I have left.

Homer delicately rewraps the sandwich, puts it back into his lunch pail and trudges away.

ANOTHER WORKER

(TO LENNY) Domestic situation.

INT. SIMPSON CAR

As Marge continues down the road she passes a church and sees a NEWLYWED COUPLE emerge, getting rice thrown at them. Marge shields her vision with her left hand. She then sees a YOUNG COUPLE with a baby stroller. She then sees a pleasant FAMILY having a picnic. She drives past the zoo and there is an APE FAMILY looking back at her. The Mother and Father Ape are holding hands. Further down the road she sees an OLD COUPLE holding hands, then two graves side-by-side in the town cemetery, then two skeletons side-by-side holding hands in a costume shop window.

MARGE POV

She is rapidly coming to a fork in the road. The right fork leads to the "Fiesta Terrace" and the left fork leads to the nuclear power plant.

NEW ANGLE

Marge's car -- without a moment's hesitation -- takes the right fork and heads for Bjorn's apartment. One hundred yards down the road, the car SCREECHES to a stop and backs up with its tires spinning. Marge is looking out the back window and draping her right arm over the backseat as she backs up. When the car gets to the fork, it turns left and heads for the power plant. One hundred yards toward the plant, the car SCREECHES to a stop again, then slowly backs up until it gets to the fork in the road. It stops there and idles.

INT. POWER PLANT - TEN MINUTES LATER - VARIOUS ANGLES

Marge enters and with a purposeful expression, walks past various WORKERS who look up at her surprised and slightly confused. MUSIC: "Up Where We Belong" from "Officer and a Gentleman".

HOMER

is working, wearing his protective helmet and radiation suit. He looks up and sees Marge is there.

HOMER

Marge!

They hug.

HOMER (CONT'D)

What a lovely surprise! You're here to
see me, right?

MARGE

Of course.

Homer picks up Marge and starts to carry her out. He puts his safe helmet on her head a la "An Officer and a Gentleman." MUSIC swells.

All of Homer's CO-WORKERS turn from the gauges and machines they're supposed to be watching and **APPLAUD** as Homer starts to carry Marge triumphantly out of the room. MUSIC swells again.

LENNY

Way to go, Homer. Way to go.

ANOTHER WORKER

(TO HOMER) Hey, what'll I tell the
boss?

HOMER

Tell him I'm going to the backseat of
my car with the woman I love and I
won't be back for ten minutes.

The dials start going crazy, indicating a possible terminal meltdown, but none of the workers notice it. They continue grinning, **CHEERING** and **APPLAUDING** as Homer carries Marge out past the flashing warning lights.

FADE OUT.

THE END