

= Natural Selection (The Spectacular Spider @-@ Man) =

" Natural Selection " is the third episode of the animated television series The Spectacular Spider @-@ Man , which is based on the comic book character Spider @-@ Man , created by Stan Lee and Steve Ditko . In the episode , Spider @-@ Man must face " The Lizard , " who was a lab professor he was interning for until he was mutated by a serum designed to regrow his missing arm .

" Natural Selection " was written by Matt Wayne , known for his work on Justice League Unlimited , and was the first time he had done so for The Spectacular Spider @-@ Man . David Bullock directed it . " Natural Selection " originally aired on March 15 , 2008 , on the Kids WB ! block for The CW network , and met overwhelmingly positive reviews from critics , who praise it for its action sequences , narrative direction , and the new design for Lizard .

= = Plot summary = =

During his patrol , Spider @-@ Man stops a group of thieves who are breaking into a bakery . Simultaneously , Spider @-@ Man takes pictures to give to the Daily Bugle . He happily leaves and makes it back home in times for his curfew , but discovers after developing his photos that he has messed them up . Meanwhile , Dr. Curt Connors injects himself with lizard serum to aid the regrowth of his arm . When he awakes , his arm has regrown , but knowing that he experimented on himself , his wife , Martha , is furious .

At school , Peter is attacked with water balloons by Flash Thompson and his sidekick Kenny Kong , which he dodges until he realizes it might reveal his secret identity as Spider @-@ Man . Gwen steps in and gets everyone to laugh at Flash instead . Gwen and Peter go to the Connors lab and help Eddie clean up from a previous battle with Electro . Martha announces that Curt 's arm had grown back and they celebrate until they realize scales are growing on his arm , determining that the reptilian half of his brain is taking over . Peter tries to comfort the Connors 's son , Billy , but gets interrupted when Curt transforms into a hulking , humanoid lizard and runs off .

While Eddie goes in pursuit , Peter manages to slip out and goes after Connors as Spider @-@ Man . While trying to communicate with him , they end up on a subway train fighting both inside , outside , and underneath it . Finally , Spider @-@ Man falls off the train and Connors escapes . Spider @-@ Man returns to the lab and is given a gene cleanser from Martha which must be administered to Connors orally . He then goes off to Bronx Zoo , where Connors is reportedly at .

Spider @-@ Man enters the lizard room where Connors has taken refuge . Connors knocks him out and Eddie arrives to help him out . When he regains consciousness , Spider @-@ Man comes up with a plan to trick him into the polar bear pond . They almost succeed when Connors is alerted by Spider @-@ Man 's cellphone ringing . Billy then arrives and tries to talk some sense into his father , but it is useless and Spider @-@ Man leaps in to get Connors into the pond . Spider @-@ Man pours the cleanser into the mouth of Connors who , as a result , returns to normal , his arm lost once more .

The next day , Peter gets the Lizard photos published in the Bugle and gets the money he needs . However , when Gwen , Eddie , and the Connors find out , they are outraged that he ran off simply to take pictures and say he has lost their trust . Although Martha understands the difficult choices that Peter had , she fires him . He secretly grabs another vial of gene cleanser and returns home , frustrated about his reputation . Blaming the events that gave him his powers , he is about to take the vial when he sees a photo of himself with Ben . Realizing that he had saved Curt either way , he decides that Spider @-@ Man is needed and hides the vial under his desk .

= = Production = =

" Natural Selection " was the first episode to be written by Matt Wayne . Wayne wrote two other episodes in the first season : " The Invisible Hand " and " Persona . " David Bullock was the episode 's director . Dee Bradley Baker , a voice actor for animated series and video games , continued his

role as Dr. Connors / The Lizard .

The episode originally broadcast on March 15 , 2008 , on the Kids WB ! programming block for The CW Network . When Disney XD premiered The Spectacular Spider @-@ Man on March 23 , 2009 , it aired " Natural Selection " after the previous two episodes , " Survival of the Fittest " and " Interactions . "

= = Cultural references = =

Greg Weisman , one of The Spectacular Spider @-@ Man 's producers came up with a continuing title scheme that follows " The Education of Peter Parker . " The first three episode titles (" Survival of the Fittest " , " Interactions " , and " Natural Selection ") follow a biology theme . Peter 's ringtone is " The Itsy Bitsy Spider . " The episode incorporates several bullet time moments that are referent to the same style employed in The Matrix films .

= = Reception = =

Natural Selection received critical acclaim . Eric Goldman of IGN gave it an 8 @. @ 8 out of 10 (" Great ") . Goldman praised the Lizard 's design , calling it " the most visually familiar villain the show had introduced yet " and called the fight sequences " great , " especially that of the climactic fight between Spider @-@ Man and Lizard . Goldman called Peter 's loss of the Connors 's and Eddie 's trust " a very well done , classic Peter Parker @-@ can 't @-@ win scenario " and that the episode did a " great job " blending the normal and Spider @-@ Man parts of Peter 's life .

Season Elliot , senior editor of iF Magazine , gave the episode an A- , writing " The Lizard himself was a nice update of the original Lizard and he was still in his torn pants , shirt , and lab coat . " Elliot praised the design for differentiating itself from that used for Spider @-@ Man or Spider @-@ Man : The New Animated Series , and that he " can 't wait for the action figure of this guy ! " Like Goldman and Tanaka , Elliot enjoyed the action style and fight sequences and the callbacks to Lizard 's original comic book appearance .