

= Survival of the Fittest (The Spectacular Spider @-@ Man) =

" Survival of the Fittest " is the pilot 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 . The episode was written and directed by the series developers , Greg Weisman and Victor Cook . In the episode , Spider @-@ Man (Josh Keaton) faces the evil Vulture (Robert Englund) as he begins his junior year in high school .

Sony Entertainment originally conceived The Spectacular Spider @-@ Man as a series of four DVDs , and asked Weisman and Cook to develop it . The central idea was to follow Spider @-@ Man in his younger years in the comics ; Weisman and Cook wanted to incorporate the styles of the early comic publications by Lee and Ditko . Reviewers have cited other influences in the themes , such as the live action film series and the Ultimate Spider @-@ Man continuity .

" Survival of the Fittest " originally aired on March 8 , 2008 , on the Kids ' WB block on The CW . It had previously been shown to a large audience at the 2008 WonderCon . The episode was the highest rated program of the Kids WB ! 2007 @-@ 2008 combined with the second episode " Interactions " and alone received a Nielsen rating of 1 @. @ 2 / 3 . It was well received by critics , IGN calling it " a Spider @-@ Man story that feels like classic Spider @-@ Man , and that 's a good thing . "

= = Plot = =

The night before school starts , Spider @-@ Man , alter ego of Peter Parker (Josh Keaton) , foils an attempted bank robbery ; in the background , a shadowed figure tells his henchman " Hammerhead " to summon the " Enforcers " to kill Spider @-@ Man . The next day , an aerodynamic engineer named Adrian Toomes (Robert Englund) is outraged at OsCorp for stealing his anti @-@ gravity project , until Norman Osborn (Alan Rachins) arrives and he is escorted out by security , Toomes turns to Octavius and declares that he no longer blames him for the theft of his work . Meanwhile , Peter arrives at school and tells his friends Gwen (Lacey Chabert) and Harry (James Arnold Taylor) that he is determined to get a date with Sally Avril , though both she and Flash Thompson (Joshua LeBar) humiliate him in front of everyone . After school , Peter and Gwen are offered an internship at Dr. Connor 's lab , where the former was given his superpowers ; both accept . Peter goes to Harry 's apartment , where Norman congratulates him on his newfound career . Toomes , going by the name " Vulture , " breaks in wearing a suit with built @-@ in metallic wings and talons , with his anti @-@ gravity technology incorporated to it and kidnaps Norman . Peter slips out to don the Spider @-@ Man costume and pursues Vulture . He succeeds in rescuing Norman but loses to Vulture in a fight .

Later , Peter goes to the lab where he meets up with Gwen , his close friend Eddie Brock (Benjamin Diskin) , and the Connors . When he finds out he will not be paid for the internship , he tries to sell pictures to the Daily Bugle publisher J. Jonah Jameson (Daran Norris) , though he is kicked out near immediately .

That night , Norman is attacked by the Vulture once more and when Spider @-@ Man tries to stop him , he is fired upon by the Enforcers , who distract him while Vulture chases after Norman 's limousine . While being pursued by the Enforcers , he follows after Vulture and ends up defeating him while getting the assassins off his back . When he returns home , his Aunt May (Deborah Strang) gives him a curfew to ensure he doesn 't come home late again and gives him a slice of pie .

= = Production = =

The Spectacular Spider @-@ Man was originally conceived by Sony Entertainment as a series of four animated DVDs that chronicled the Spider @-@ Man character in his youth . The company brought in Victor Cook and Greg Weisman to help with development . Weisman had had critical success with the series Gargoyles , while Cook worked on the Hellboy animated features . They

both had been Spider @-@ Man fans for decades , as well .

Weisman wanted to incorporate the early stages of the comic when Stan Lee and Steve Ditko where the character was in his younger stages ; Cook agreed because he had yet to see it done before in any type of adaptation for the character . Other influences on the style were the Ultimate Spider @-@ Man comics and the live action film adaptions of the comic publications . When the idea was changed to an animated television series , they still kept a similar chronicle style where " each episode stands alone as its own story , but like the comic book itself it ? s a saga . Then each three episodes is a story and those three episodes are what would be on the DVD releases . "

The original title for the series was The Amazing Spider @-@ Man , based on the Spider @-@ Man comic publication of the same name . In mid @-@ 2007 , the title was changed to The Spectacular Spider @-@ Man , as well a Spider @-@ Man comic series . Weisman prepared for his role as a story editor of the new series by going out and purchasing the first seven volumes of The Essential Spider @-@ Man , which he had previously read as a child. he re @-@ read them in order to " get the voice of those early stories " and took extensive notes .

The show was given a specific budget , so Weisman and Cook wanted to allow the animation to " move " more than anything , giving it simple and stylistic designs . Sam Raimi , director of the Spider @-@ Man live action films , " set the bar " for the fluent movement styles Spider @-@ Man has , which Weisman and Cook were in complete agreement of incorporating into the series . When designing the Vulture , the two employed the dark green shades from his original design , a color which they use thematically for most of their villains and other negative aspects of Peter 's life , along with touches of blood @-@ like red . His wings were employed in the same style that his comic book counterpart ; " [They are] for steering [...] they don ? t keep him air born , " Weisman describes . Vulture was voiced by Robert Englund , iconic for his portrayal as the horror film character Freddy Kruger .

" Survival of the Fittest " was written by Weisman and directed by Cook . The episode originally aired on March 8 , 2008 , on the Kids WB ! block for The CW network . It had previously been shown to a packed audience at the 2008 WonderCon ; several goers were forced to stand and the creators and other members of the crew took the stage to answer questions . When Disney XD premiered the series , it aired the episode , along with the following two , " Interactions " and " Natural Selection , " on March 23 , 2009 .

= = Cultural references = =

" Survival of the Fittest " follows a title scheme given by Weisman that follows " The Education of Peter Parker . " For the episode and beginning arc of season one , the titles are based on Biology . The scene in the episode in which Spider @-@ Man catches Norman Osborn in mid @-@ air and makes several sarcastic comments to Vulture , such as " You guys play hot potato hardcore ! " and " He may be right . I only rent [the skies] , ? were described by Comic Mix reviewer Alan Kistler as in the attitude of Bugs Bunny .

= = Reception = =

In its original broadcast , " Survival of the Fittest " received a Nielsen rating of 1 @. @ 2 / 3 , which is considered high for American television . The rating was the top mark for the 10 : 00 a.m. timeslot for the 2007 @-@ 2008 season and was a 20 % increase of the previous week 's . In key kids 2 @-@ 11 , it received a rating of 1 @. @ 4 / 5 , a 25 % increase from the previous week 's mark in the demographic .

Since airing , the episode has received positive reviews from critics . IGN reviewer Eric Goldman gave the episode an eight out of ten rating , commenting that it was " literally jam @-@ packed with classic Spider @-@ Man characters " and " a Spider @-@ Man story that feels like classic Spider @-@ Man . " Goldman praised the 1960s @-@ inspired style and described the humor as both " corny " and " legitimately , " along with the fight sequences . Goldman enjoyed the fight sequences where Spider @-@ Man faces the Vulture and Fancy Dan and gave " kodos " to the sound design

teams for the " distinctive " noises made by Vulture 's motors , along with the animation style .

Sean Elliot , senior edit of iF Magazine , gave " Survival of the Fittest " an " A " ; Elliot wrote that it was " a Spider @-@ man cartoon that 's for all ages and ranges . " Elliot said that he enjoyed the usage of several different Spider @-@ Man villains to the point of watching the episode twice . Though the Vulture is not a favorite of Elliot 's , he commented that the episode made him seem " pretty cool ; " he went on to praise the voice cast , including Englund 's performance as Vulture . Like Goldman , Elliot commented favorably on the animation style and nods to classic comic stories and said that it had a " bit for every level of Spider @-@ man fan . "