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Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Adventures Volume 7



Synopsis

The all-ages TMNT action continues in this collection of TMNT Adventures! Enjoy classic Turtles tales like "Search and Destroy", "Gimme Danger," "Raw Power," "The Keeper," and "In The Dark." Collects issues #23-27 of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Adventures Archie Comics series.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Stephen Murphy is an American comic book writer and editor known for his work on the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles series. With Michael Zulli, he was co-creator of the critically acclaimed 1980s independent comic The Puma Blues. Alongside fellow Mirage staffer Ryan Brown, the two men revamped the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Adventures title for Archie Comics, beginning in 1989 with issue #5. In their hands the comic immediately diverged from the cartoon series into unique new story arcs, often incorporating social, environmentalist, and animal rights themes. It also introduced several new characters of various races and backgrounds, including humans, mutants, aliens, and other anthropomorphic creatures. The stories were often seen as "deeper" and more "serious" than the cartoon. During that period, Murphy co-created the characters Jagwar, Nova Posse, Snake-Eyes, and Sarnath; he united several of the series' recurring characters as a separate team, the Mighty Mutanimals. Murphy wrote the majority of his work on TMNT Adventures under the name "Dean Clarrain."

The evolution of Archie's Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Adventures is enthralling, to say the

least. From its vanilla days as direct retreads of the Fred Wolf cartoon, to imaginative tales in the same stylized vein as the show, to darker, more ambitious stories that incorporate environmental issues and myriad philosophies from world religions; the bygone series is occasionally didactic and one-sided, but Dean Clarrain and the writers remain invariably true to classic Turtles tropes while telling rich, compelling stories. Volume 7 of the IDW trades, collecting Issues #23-27, adds striking new layers to established players. The lithe, no-nonsense April O'Neil becomes increasingly well-versed in the art of ninjitsu, thanks to Splinter's tutelage; and even the dastardly Shredder's veiled sense of honor is brought to the fore. Volume 7's inaugural issue, "Search and Destroy", begins the mildly amusing Slash trilogy in which a pitiable yet oddly adorable-looking Krang (reeling in exile since TMNTA #13) escapes the toxic prison planet with the help of two newfound allies: Slash, a psychotic terrapin with a raging hard-on for palm trees; and Bellybomb, a cyclopean outlaw with weapons-grade halitosis. Issue #23 marks the penciling debut of Chris Allan, whose name would become most synonymous with the series. Although Ken Mitchroney certainly defined the title's whimsical style, Allan would ultimately bring a refined consistency to the series, tempering cartoonish absurdity with more mainstream comic-style action. Allan's first foray is top-notch, though his Ninja Turtles aren't as smooth and polished as we'll see in later issues and his depictions of Krang are too cutesy for my tastes. From a storytelling standpoint, the Watchmen-style scene transitions are well-executed and enhance both the pace and tone. En route to Earth in a purloined spacecraft, Krang, Slash, and Bellybomb are diverted to a lush, utopian planet where they stumble upon Bebop and Rocksteady. Meanwhile, the Turtles crash Shredder's bonsai-pruning party. The artistic quality of "Gimme Danger!" (#24) is marred by a discordant shift between Garrett Ho's fluid style and Jim Lawson's haphazard cartooning. While Lawson effectively captures movement and action sequences, his sparse detailing leaves much to be desired. The visuals in the story's second half are horrendous and sully an otherwise solid script. In "Raw Power" (#25), Slash takes to the streets to reclaim his beloved palm tree while Bebop and Rocksteady gather provisions for their return-trip to Eden-World. Simultaneously, the Turtles are pitted against Bellybomb and the (literally) combined strength of Krang and Shredder. The Slash trilogy functions as something of a last hoorah for several mainstay villains from the animated series. In an effort to further deviate from the Fred Wolf cartoon, Dean Clarrain bids adieu to Krang, Rocksteady, and Bebop once and for all. What's more, the Shredder's involvement in TMNT Adventures is heavily diminished. The removal of these prominent characters would help to reshape the series and allow for more complex and mature storytelling. To their credit, Clarrain and TPTB

succeeded in giving these beloved characters a proper sendoff. In a standalone story titled "The Keeper" (#26), Splinter is beckoned by Tāo Pau, a yeti mystic living in the frosty mountains of Tibet. When Tāo Pau warns him of an impending alien threat, Splinter conscripts the Turtles to aid their newfound friend. No sooner do they arrive in Tibet that Tāo is seized by a Cthulhu/Doctor Octopus mash-up dubbed Boss Salvage. Aboard the preternatural being's spaceship, Salvage is revealed to be a collector of rare species from dying planets, abducting Nessies and Sasquatches in an imprudent act of alien conservationism. At first blush one would assume that Dean Clarrain is back atop his environmental soapbox, preaching doom and gloom about pollution—but as it happens, this issue was scripted by Doug Brammer, not Steve Murphy's alter ego. (I know. I was shocked, too.) Still, this rejected Captain Planet story has all the overblown preachiness of a Dean Clarrain script. Ken Mitchroney makes a welcome return, but even his quality penciling does little to compensate for this uninspired filler episode. "In the Dark" (#27) is yet another cautionary tale of environmental responsibility, though less sanctimonious and more palatable than "The Keeper", thanks to some clever horror-movie trappings. In an obvious ode to H.P. Lovecraft, a chemical company in Innsmouth, Massachusetts is deliberately engaging in industrial pollution with the hired help of two blue-collar slobs, George and Bennie, a pastiche of Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*. Months later, a flat tire strands April O'Neil in the hitherto unknown hamlet where the local constabulary is far from friendly and the townspeople shamble about, zombie-style. After being roofied by a diner waitress, a disoriented April manages to summon the Turtles using something called a pay phone. Racing to the rescue, the foursome manages to save her from an uncanny trio of mutated animals, the by-products of corporate greed and avarice. The denouement features a mirthful parody of the final scene from John Carpenter's *Halloween*, right down to the cribbed dialogue. Because Ken Mitchroney's depictions of April were never all that inspiring or attractive, this offering feels subpar, what with the bodacious reporter taking a lead role in the story. Between the Lovecraft nods and obvious horror tropes, Issue #27 makes for a memorable entry. As an added bonus, Volume 7 is peppered with mini backup stories featuring a katana-wielding April as she races to save Chu Hsi (a.k.a. Warrior Dragon) and former curio-shop owner Fu Sheng from a clan of sorcerous ninja. Action-oriented and laced with intrigue, these solo ventures not only foreshadow the "Midnight Sun" story arc, but would eventually pave the way for April's self-titled miniseries.

Inside the comic book, when Shredder's head was revealed without a helmet and a mask on, he

looked like Randolph Mantooth a la John Gage in TV's "Emergency".

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