

TMNT: Terrible Movie Now in Theatres



Apple.com / The Internet

by Jim London

The new Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles was the Holy Ghost in a Trinity of disappointments that befell me last Friday evening. First, badminton night was preempted by a high school girls' volleyball tournament. Next, I went to the theatre in hopes of seeing the new Adam Sandler movie, *Reign over Me*, but it was sold out. So, requiring content for this week's Arts & Entertainment section, I went to see the only recognizable film among the non-sellouts, *TMNT*, the latest feature in the Ninja Turtles franchise that began with comics in '84, then the kids' cartoon in '87, finally including three live-action "classics" in the '90s.

The rubber turtle suits of those films are gone, replaced with cartoonish computer graphics in the now-ubiquitous style of Pixar Studios and its imitators. These graphics aren't great -- I commented to my companion that the animations from 2002's *Warcraft III* computer game were prettier, and I stand by that assessment.

In fact, there wasn't any aspect of the movie that pleased me much. I kept telling myself that the Ninja Turtles were designed to appeal to nine-year-olds; indeed, I made a constant effort to embrace my internal fourth-grader as I watched the movie. The problem is that the script isn't written just for children -- its authors clearly had some intention of appealing to a new audience, but they also seemed intent on crafting their opus for the aging Gen-X latecomers who comprised the show's following of old. The result is that the hackneyed, sappy affair that bundles the occasional action sequence with loads of ridiculous dialog and family-values-oriented, bullshit philosophizing about the nature of teamwork and brotherhood.

TMNT is only 80 minutes long, but it drags on longer than some movies of twice its length. Sure, the action sequences are generally fun, but they seem few and far between, with the silly plot and drab characters weighing down the picture like a leatherback in a hot air balloon (hint: leatherback turtles are the 4th largest reptile in the world!).

The most poorly realized character has to be Master Splinter. He's supposed to be a mutated human-rat hybrid, but he looks like a cross

between Chester Cheetah (the Cheetos mascot) and the acorn-obsessed squirrel from the *Ice Age* movies. Once reserved and wise, Splinter has been reduced to long-winded ejaculations of pop-psychobabble and an action sequence cameo wherein he asserts that, yes kids, despite his advanced age, he's still got what it takes. I actually laughed out loud at many of his half-baked lines, expecting him at any time to pensively muse, "It ain't easy being cheesy." The aged sensei also maintains a Shelf of Significant Helmets that must be seen to be believed.

The Turtles themselves bear little resemblance to the cartoon heroes I remember from my youth. Donatello and Michelangelo play bit parts, trotted out on cue to tinker with the occasional gadget and scarf pizza; "Mikey" also performs a lengthy sewer-skateboarding routine that does nothing to advance character or plot, and falls short of the visual tour-de-force apparently intended by the filmmakers. Raphael, my favourite Ninja Turtle, is not the "cool but rude" dude of the kids' show, but a humourless, disillusioned vigilante with a chip on his shoulder. He's mad at Leonardo for skipping off to the Central American jungle (where

the movie begins) for some quiet time and to learn how to be a better leader. The result of their rivalry is probably the best scene in the movie: Leonardo and Raphael engage in a bitterly fought rooftop duel that had me as close to the edge of my seat as I came.

While I won't say who prevails, I will tell you that this is the high point in the movie; the rest of the film resolves an absurd plot involving an ancient, immortal emperor-cum-museum-curator (voiced, sadly, by the venerable Patrick Stewart), his four stone generals, and 13 goofy monsters. Oh, and there's an unnecessary love side-story involving April O'Neill (more Action Ninja than Action News) and Casey Jones (who's portrayed as a heart-throb indie rocker instead of the escaped mental patient I imagined him to be when I was a boy) that culminates in a contrived victory kiss. The foot clan also makes an appearance, and their foxy leading lady concludes the film with the "enigmatic" assertion that the Turtles will soon have to deal with a reincarnated specter from their past. Hmm.

For the sake of my still-barely-intact nostalgia, I think I'll pass on the sequel.

10 easy steps to a crunch-time essay

by Sheah Gaston

It's that time once again, that time that's kind of like Christmas for students -- only in this Christmas, Santa looks like your Classics prof and instead of delivering presents, he's beating you into submission with a pile of papers thick as a phone book. It's that wonderful time when we students grudgingly receive the so-called "gift" of learning. That's right, it's essay time!

So when you suddenly realize you've got an essay due tomorrow, and it's gotta be 18 pages long and you're on word number zero, you wonder how, despite the fact that this happens every semester, you didn't see this coming. Never fear, essay victims! Here's a foolproof ten step guide to finishing an essay in one night!*

1. Bring out the looseleaf. Write your topic and the general purpose of your essay at the top of the page. It will probably shift by the end of your essay, but it's always good to have a starting point. Your urge to procrastinate will be strongest here.

2. By now you're probably staring blankly at the paper, feeling totally drained. Your roommate is probably watching Heroes and eating chocolate or something. Go procrastinate for an hour.

3. Now the serious brainstorming should begin. Go through your research, copying out quotes in shorthand or noting page numbers -- whatever it takes to get ideas flowing. Whenever you have a thought about the quote or how it relates to other information, write that down. Make sure you write specifically why each quote relates to your essay -- you'll thank yourself later. Write down any ideas you have, scribbling as fast as possible. Whatever you do, don't stop writing. Write down even your most ludicrous ideas, so you can filter them or flesh them out later.

4. Spend half-an-hour "microwaving popcorn," all the while really just feeling sorry for yourself and wondering if it's too late to drop the

course so you don't have to write the essay. Then drag your ass as slowly as possible to your room, stopping to stare at the walls for no reason.

5. When you try to start writing, you will most likely stare at the computer screen for five minutes thinking about toenails. Resist the urge to pick up the phone and call people you haven't talked to in ages just to avoid working. Put some energetic music on to kick-start your brain.

6. Organize your brainstormed ideas, putting them in categories according to topic. Each topic will become a paragraph or series of paragraphs in your essay. When each grouping is complete, sit back for a second and think about how they relate. Modify your thesis here if necessary. Then put them in a logical order.

7. Flesh out your "paragraphs" into full sentences, incorporating the full quotations you pagemarked in your topic groups. Whenever one grouping turns into a massive three page paragraph, split it up wherever you can find shifts in tone.

8. Write your introduction and conclusion last, and then print off a rough draft of your essay. Read it out loud to catch awkward or incorrect ideas or sentences. Have a friend do the same, to find mistakes, typos, and massive grammatical errors. Mark errors in pen.

9. Go back to your digital copy, having made and consumed a pot of coffee beforehand, and edit your essay. Add sentences, quotes, ideas, and so forth whenever it occurs to you. Print it and check again for errors. Then you can type up your bibliography or works cited, as well as your title page.

10. Staple your essay together and put it somewhere you won't forget it. If anything remains of the night, try to get some sleep. Then walk into class (yes, you will look like crap) and hand in your essay.

* Note to reader: this article assumes you've already found material for your research. For great tips on researching and finding materials for essays in all disciplines, see one of the library's fabulous research advisers. Just ask for them at the front desk to get things started.

Student film festival seeking submissions

submitted to The Bruns

The Student Shorts Film Festival is back for a 7th season of showcasing the best and brightest of student films from Canada and around the world

- Festival Dates October 20th to 21st, 2007 -

Toronto, March 23, 2007 -- Student Shorts is pleased to announce that the festival is now accepting submissions for the 2007 event, to be held in downtown Toronto on October 20th and 21st.

Dedicated exclusively to promoting the work of post-secondary film students, the two-day event will showcase an average of 40 short films chosen from the hundreds of entries received. It will also include workshops, a Best Canadian Film competition, and the famous Student Shorts Festival after-party and awards ceremony.

Student filmmakers from post-

secondary institutions across the country are invited to submit their short films for consideration. Deadline for submission is June 1st, 2007. Early submission will be accepted (through withoutabox) until April 1st, 2007, and the deadline for international submissions is July 1st, 2007. Submission information, forms and criteria are available on the Student Shorts Film Festival Website at: www.studentshorts.com.

Student Shorts is a Toronto based not-for-profit organization that provides an annual forum where young filmmakers can showcase their work to their peers, industry, potential distributors and the public in a positive and energetic environment. The festival's aim is to provide exposure, recognition and opportunities to film students, and to give audiences the chance to see the work of the next generation of filmmakers.

Student Shorts was started in 2001 by Erin Tee, Alex Galeote and Iain Robinson, co-founders of Endless Films.

For more information please visit: www.studentshorts.com.

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