

Teenage Mutant

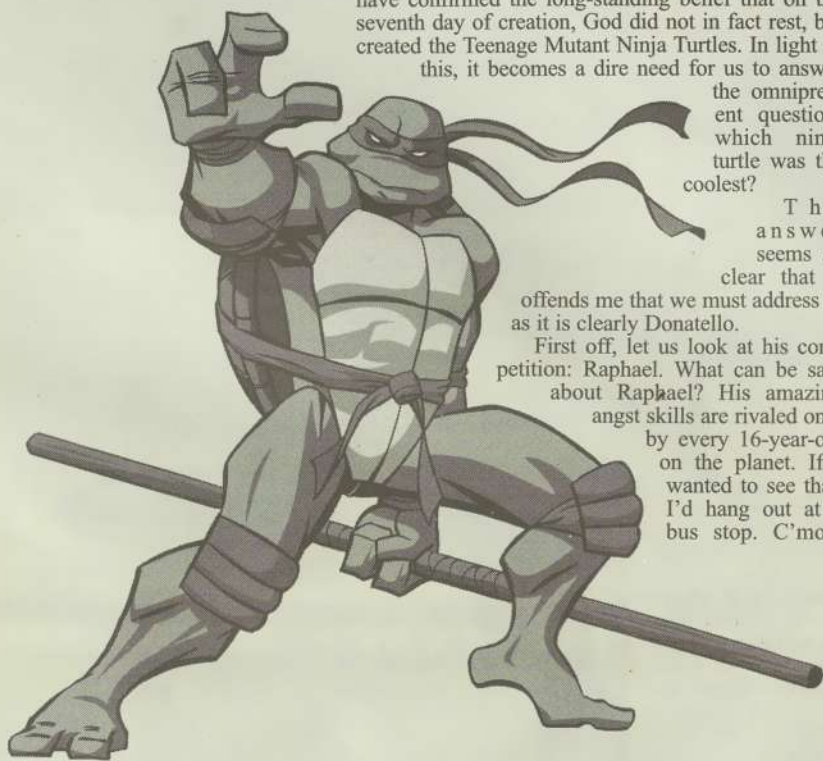


Donatello is clearly the coolest

Ben Maras

Donatello

Ancient texts recently found in a trash can near the Dead Sea scrolls have confirmed the long-standing belief that on the seventh day of creation, God did not in fact rest, but created the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. In light of this, it becomes a dire need for us to answer the omnipresent question: which ninja turtle was the coolest?



The answer seems so clear that it offends me that we must address it, as it is clearly Donatello.

First off, let us look at his competition: Raphael. What can be said about Raphael? His amazing angst skills are rivaled only by every 16-year-old on the planet. If I wanted to see that, I'd hang out at a bus stop. C'mon,

this isn't Teenage Mutant Alcoholic Transit-Rats, why do people give him so much credit? Those who think of him as the leader can only do so because the others spent half their time charging after him trying to save his green ass. Two thumbs down for the turtle in red.

Next off is Michelangelo. He gets points deducted only for his name being so hard to spell. I can only imagine he was meant to provide the comic relief—yeah, ok. A turtle that eats every two seconds and says “dude” in a squeaky, disjointed voice as every third word ... sounds as original and entertaining as Garfield to me (that's not a compliment).

The only people who Michelangelo was a hero to are the brain-dead stoners who surf (or nowadays skate) their lives away. “Dude, I'll like, trade you this totally righteous bag of pork rinds for some *salvia*; whudyasay dude?” With a myriad of other dumb “stoner-flicks” one can indulge in, it makes me wonder why Leonardo would actually choose to enjoy this character.

Next was Leonardo. He was definitely a step up from either of the latter ... but that's not saying a whole lot. At least Leonardo had some form of brains, and a brain capacity that wasn't hindered by psychoactives or something far more damaging: teenage angst. Honestly, I had nothing against Leonardo, only that anything he did was far excelled at by Donatello.

Donatello was the brains of the outfit ... but once again, judging from most of the prior, that's not saying much. He was the techno-guru, always having some cool gadget to use to save the day—sort of like a MacGyver with a carapace. In addition to being the smartest one, he was also the most level-headed. He never let his ego, angst, or love for “nature” to get in the way of anything.

Furthermore, he had what is by far the coolest weapon out of all of them: the bo. To most it may only seem like a big stick, but anyone with even a micron of martial arts experience knows that the staff rules for versatility and effectiveness. Plus look at it this way: anyone who can fight off a slew of Foot Soldiers with swords and a giant can-opener using just a big stick has to be pretty tough, no?

If you put the numbers together, it becomes painfully obvious that it is our holy duty to select Donatello as the coolest Ninja Turtle of all time.

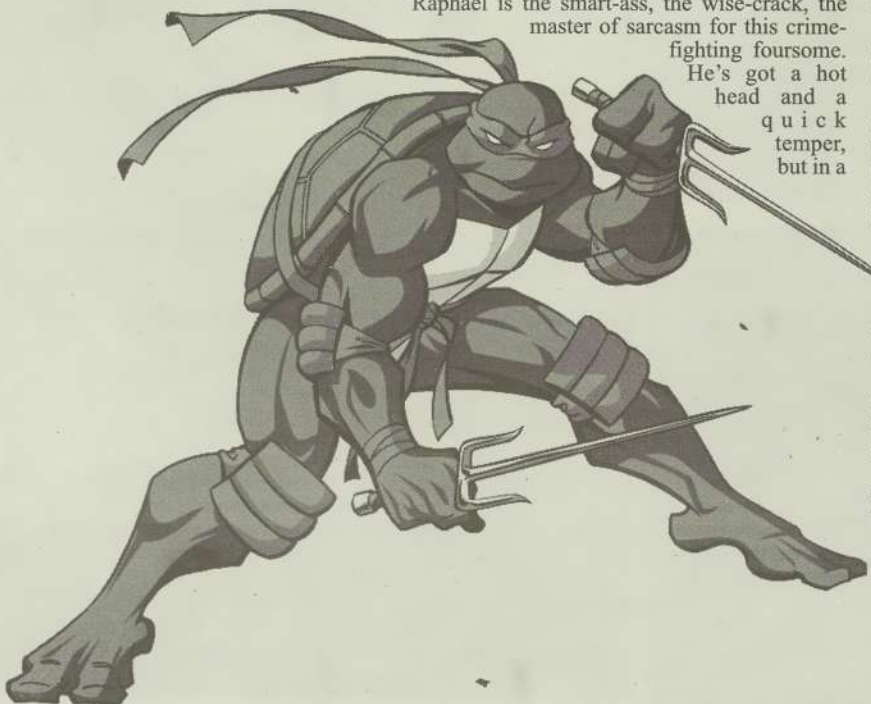
No substitute for Raphael

Jenna Johnk

Raphael

Throughout history, heroic teams have had a constant norm. Within each team there must be at least (but not limited to): the crazy goof, the brainiac, and of course the lone wolf. The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles are made up of that exact combination. But, there is no doubt that the best Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle is, indeed, Raphael. There is no substitute. No, he is not the smartest, the cleverest, nor the most careful one (he has a tendency to get beat up and kidnapped), but could any of the other TMNT beat him in a fight? I think not!

Raphael is the smart-ass, the wise-crack, the master of sarcasm for this crime-fighting foursome.



He's got a hot head and a quick temper, but in a

fight he's the best to have by your side.

He's the physically strongest of the group, and is always the first to jump into the fray. This may seem a bit rash, but he's helped swing the fight the Turtles' way many, many times. Raphael, as a fighter, is very strong and prefers the twin Sais as his weapon of choice. He is also very adept at fighting with sewer manhole covers, taking down Foot Soldier after Foot Soldier every time. He questions Leonardo's leadership at times (which all great warriors have a tendency to do) and has a tendency to pick fights with his Turtle brothers, but would risk his own life to save them all.

His attitude is that of “leave me alone, and you'll be left alone.” He starts fights, but he always finishes them. He is the very definition of a ninja—quick, strong, and practiced.

His color matches his attitude—red. He's fiery and maybe even angry, and will often wander off alone to deal with a darkness that keeps him from being as fun-loving and free as his brothers. Yet his loyalties are clear—his loyalty to Splinter and to the rest of the Turtle Team. In the first of the three movies made in the '90s, Splinter was captured by Shredder and that left the four Turtles alone in New York without his guidance. Of the four, it was Raphael who showed the most passion and pain for the loss of their mentor and surrogate father. This is how it always is. Even in his anger, he would never turn on his friends. Raphael is always the first to act, the first to fight and the first to stand up against evil. Raphael feels, more than any of his brothers, the need to protect the little guy, to help those who cannot help themselves.

Though he is hot-headed, he at times is the portrait of a hero. Was not Hercules heated and tenacious? Or Achilles? Raphael may be a little rough around the edges, but he's got it where it counts—in his heart, in his fists, and in his backbone (or, should I say, shell).

He is a loner, but a turtle of action. Arrogant, but self-confident. Passionate, but complex. He fights hard and fights well. Of any of the TMNT, he is the most mysterious and most driven. If he were a human, ladies would swoon (hell, they may even swoon now). So it's obvious to see that without Raphael, the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles would be incomplete.