

Distractions

Comics Survey

Not only a unique title

Michaelangelo, teenage mutant ninja turtle, is a one-shot "micro-series" from Mirage Studios featuring one of the four teenage mutant ninja turtles, and is one of the most unique comics available on the market.

It begins with Michaelangelo, out of his ninja uniform, walking through New York City, admiring the Christmas decorations and generally enjoying himself. While shopping for presents to give to his friends (the other turtles) Michaelangelo witnesses a robbery in progress. Some young hoods hijacking a shipment of "L'il Or-

ZOUNDS! IT'S CAPT. DEMENTO AND HIS KILLER ROBOT CAT KLUNK!



phan Alien" dolls, the hit of the holiday season, are interrupted by the turtle and hasten to escape. Michaelangelo, however, possessing powers and skills far beyond that of the average turtle, leapt onto the back of the truck and saved the dolls which were intended for a children's home.

Okay, so the plot is a bit hokey, but it's carried off with



finesse, action, and a deft sense of humour. The chase scene is better than most, and at what you'd believe to be the climax, is only the beginning as Michaelangelo stops the thieves in mid-town Manhattan, and realizes he can't just leave the truck in the street so he attempts to return it to the store. The police, of course, are on the lookout for the stolen truck. Add to this the fact that the turtles wish to keep out of sight, and you've got a good, fast-paced story with just the right amount of Christmas fluff.

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles is a quarterly comic created and published by Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird, who operate Mirage Studios. The pair took the graphic world by storm with their comedic parody of Frank Miller's Ronin, and followed it up by continuing their series with undoubtedly one of the most unique and longest titles in the business.

The turtles are just that, turtles. Shades of Stan Lee, they were affected by radiation and grew to man size with developed minds as well. The four turtles were found by a rat who was likewise affected by

radiation and he named the turtles after characters in a book on classical art; Michaelangelo, Raphael, Donatello, and Leonardo. Splinter, the rat, was once the pet of a Japanese ninja, and learned the art of ninjutsu, and passed the knowledge on to the turtles. That's all I want to go into concerning the turtles' beginnings.

As for the artwork, Laird and Eastman share those responsibilities, but as for who inks whose pencils, I'm not sure, it seems to be a collaborative effort and comes off very well. The perspectives and panel layout used in TMNT and the micro-series are, if not original, different from mainstream newsstand schlock (I love that word, precise and to the point.) I think the use of zip-a-tones could be, excuse the pun, toned down a little as they often distract the reader and make the panel seem sketchy and rushed, not to mention making it difficult to decipher just what is happening.

The writing is often implausible, see the plot outline a few paragraphs above, but it's a parody, what do you expect? It's funny and is a good read.

Well worth the \$2 cover price. The cover is a full colour wraparound depicting Michaelangelo in the midst of his adventurous predicament. The insides are black and



white with wash tones as well as zips to give texture and depth to the drawings. On the subject of the writing, in TMNT the word balloons don't seem to be filled with the standard, "Now I'll use my

miracle-line to pull in the dastardly criminal who killed my uncle in the studio where I was, but neglected to stop him because I was being self-righteous and now shall dedicate my life to ridding the

world of such evil, vile meanies!" Instead, Laird and Eastman seem content to let the art tell most of the story with the characters speaking as we would. There is little

hyperbole; they talk like real people, or should I say turtles?

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles is a great magazine, well thought out and a few good laughs. It's a spoof that has taken on a life of its own and I for one hope it continues.

Michaelangelo, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle, #1 in a one issue micro-series, is a 40 page B - W magazine, \$2.00 Canadian and is available at the Wilkie's Wonderful World of Comics booth at the Fredericton Farmer's Market every Saturday morning until noon.

University of New Brunswick BICENTENNIAL LECTURES

Monday, Jan. 27 8 p.m.

MARTIN J. HILLENBRAND

Dean Rusk Professor of International Relations
The University of Georgia

*Strained Relations between the United States
and Europe*

Co-hosted by the Canadian Institute of International Affairs

Tuesday, Jan. 28 8 p.m.

FRANCIS NASH BONEY

Department of History
The University of Georgia

*The University of Georgia and Two Centuries
of Higher Education in the United States*

Location: Lounge, Alumni Memorial Building
UNB Fredericton

