Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Encyclopedia Article

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

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Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles cartoon characters—Leonardo, Raphael, Donatello, and Michaelangelo—were one of the greatest cross-media phenomena of the 1980s and early 1990s. The Turtles, ordinary pets mutated into superheroes, began as an underground comic book created by cartoonists Peter Laird and Kevin Eastman in the mid-1980s as a spoof of such comics as the mutant X-Men and the grim, urban Daredevil. An instant smash, the Turtles soon branched out into other media, including films, an animated television series, multiple toy and merchandise tie-ins, even a live-action television program. The success came at the cost of their identity, however, as the original, funky nature of the Turtles comics became more cartoonish and child-friendly to better facilitate their mass acceptance.

Further Reading:

"Eastman & Laird & Their Pet Turtles." *Comics Sense.* July1987, 50-52.

"Lights! Camera! Turtles!" *Comics Sense.* August 1989, 17-19, 50.