

As much as the family relationship among the Turtles is a powerful pull for this series, there's always the danger that the pull is so strong it keeps them from escaping that four to five-person unit. That's why Donnie unilaterally approaching Shredder to take care of Krang feels at once bold, but also like a kind of betrayal. It's not just that Donnie dares to work with Shredder; there's a bit of contempt in the way he talks about his family's lack of priorities that's very much disloyal: "[Splinter would] understand I'm making a strategic decision...if he weren't so blinded by his vendetta against you. And frankly that's the least of my concerns—I'm sure you two will have no problem renewing your feud if we're able to stop Krang." That Donnie refers to it as "your feud" rather than "our feud" suggests he's not invested in the Foot-Turtle enmity at all. For someone as intelligent as Donnie, the whole conflict must seem incredibly unnecessary, based as it is on events hundreds of years in the past. Eastman-Curnow-Waltz may not let the rift between Donnie and his family get that wide, but it'd be a gutsy move if they did. For now, however, Donnie views Shredder as merely a means to an end, a fact which Shredder is too perceptive to not realize. Much of this iteration of TMNT's greatness stems from how cunning Shredder is, and having seen potential treachery on Donnie's part, he immediately puts a contingency plan in place. This could spell trouble if the other Turtles, Splinter, and Hob's army attack too soon, but that's the price for their failure to collaborate with Donnie. It does appear that the rest of our heroes are nearly ready to attack the Foot, having trained together into an apparently effective unit. But just like Donnie and Shredder's tentative alliance, the Turtles and Hob cooperate only to carry out their respective goals, which just happen to overlap at the moment. The Turtles, or, at least, Raph, seem to have no intention of carrying their partnership farther. Surprisingly, it's Hob who's taken aback when the Turtles have a family meeting and Raph refuses to let him and the other Mutanimals join in. "Wait—I thought we were all family here," Hob growls. "Nah, f---er, we're just all mutants here...family's a whole different kinda thing," says Raph, who apparently didn't learn a lesson about alienating people after his misunderstanding with Alopex. Meanwhile, we check in with April and Casey, who are always in danger of marginalization in this series. April recognizes she's not really equipped to participate in much of anything, neither strong enough to fight nor smart enough to innovate the Turtles to victory. Grasping at the last possible thread available to her, she decides to track down Dr. Miller, a researcher deep in Foot lore, though you have to wonder how much story this decision will yield. That leaves Casey to go out on patrol in his Jason get-up. Including Alopex and Angel, that makes three good guys left to keep the city's streets safe from Hun and the other gangs Shredder leaves behind to keep working. While Casey's tensions with his dad have been a minor source of intrigue for the series, a rematch between them (with the ladies in the mix) should be a nice sideshow to the craziness about to ensue between Krang, the Foot, and the Turtles. Smith's art is sharp and energetic enough to be a more than decent replacement for Mateus Santolouco, though he lacks just a touch of Santolouco's punch. You can see the difference in the few pages of action the issue gives us. A lot of Santolouco's artistic power comes from radical perspectives and POVs that push the action in your face, giving you a close-up view of the characters' speed, strength, and skill. More often than not, Smith pulls back to the middle distance and rarely gets in very close to the action, which makes it less impressive. Smith doesn't have that reluctance in dramatic sequences, so quieter moments, like Harold quietly wishing Donnie good luck, work much better. Some Musings: - I daresay Harold's barely concealed excitement over his and Donnie's teleporter working is rather cute. The old curmudgeon has a heart after all. The post Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles #41 appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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