

FILM REVIEW

Ninja Turtles, Spider-Verse Style LUCAS WERNER**(WARNING: CONTAINS SPOILERS)**

Less than a full year since the premiere of *Rise of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: The Movie* on Netflix, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles - Mutant Mayhem* was released in theaters in early August, and it was a definite masterclass film for both new and old fans of the TMNT franchise.

In this latest version, Leo, Mikey, Raph and Donnie are still living in the sewers of New York City. They have spent most of their lives longing to be accepted by the masses of New Yorkers. However, when a band of mutants emerges to assert their dominance as the top species, they have a more urgent problem: Can our heroes put the bad guys out of commission?

This movie has both great and terrible points, so let's go over what was good first:

The animation is similar to that of the *Spider-Verse* movies, specifically how each character had been worked on by several animators. Maybe because of this, the characters in the movie are appealing, and the world

around them pops out in color at the viewers as well, which I enjoyed.

The film introduces new characters, including Ray Filet and Cynthia Utrom. The excellent use of references to other TMNT shows, including the Techno Cosmic research Institute (TCRI) from the 2012 series and Genghis Frog from the 1987 series, along with the insanely good fight scenes throughout the film add to the enjoyment.

What was bad about this movie? This iteration of Baxter Stockman does not receive as much screen time as fans would have liked. Having the character killed in the beginning just doesn't sit well with me, since he should've had a more significant role to play, compared with the previous versions of him throughout TMNT history. The method of extracting the Turtles' blood by 'milking' them was also something I found objectionable. Strapping them to a milking machine like they're cows is not only a cruel way to get it done, but it's also inhumane. There have to be more civilized ways to get

blood, and the creative team should have thought of them.

I hope that Utrom and the rest of TCRI get what's coming to them. Getting away with killing Stockman, who wanted a family, not weapons, and nearly causing the end of humanity's reign on Earth? That alone screams "Time to die!" Messing with the natural order of things can't be dealt with lightly.

For these reasons, *Mutant Mayhem* gets a 4.6 out of 5, and already I'm looking forward to the sequel, which will include a new version of the Turtles' greatest adversary, "The Shredder."

If you want to see *Mutant Mayhem*, the movie is now streaming on Paramount Plus. In the meantime, while *Mutant Mayhem's* sequel is being made, you can check out *Tales of The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, a new Nickelodeon series coming to Paramount Plus in 2024. This installment of the franchise will fill in the blanks between *Mutant Mayhem's* aftermath and the second movie with new friends and new foes. I can't wait!



Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles- Mutant Mayhem came to theaters on August 4th. Photo by Lucas Werner

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Striding Across the Shatterverse: Sonic Prime Season 2 LUCAS WERNER**(WARNING: CONTAINS SPOILERS)**

Sonic Prime premiered on Netflix in December of last year. Following its success, the second season came out this past summer, and it was just as amazing as the first.

Here's the story up to this point: After a battle with Dr. Eggman doesn't go as planned, Sonic finds himself in an alternate multiverse called the "Shatterverse," where there are four distorted versions of his original reality, each holding a fragment of the mysterious "Paradox Prism" that Sonic had shattered. Now he has to find the shards and bring them together in order to restore Green Hill to its normal self. It won't be easy, though.

This second season hit both good and bad notes with me. Let's focus on the good first.

Finally finding out what happened to Shadow after the Paradox Prism broke in Season 1 was definitely a good thing. While Sonic was caught in the shockwave created by the prism's shattering, Shadow used the Chaos Emerald he had on hand to teleport out of the shockwave's path, but when he

came out of the warp, he found himself in "The Void," an empty space between the Shatter Spaces. Shadow also lost the emerald when he got knocked out by floating crystals. So all the while Sonic was exploring the Shatterverse in the first

season, Shadow was trying to contact him.

The season is filled with epic and breathtaking fight scenes. Chaos Sonic's design surpasses Metal Sonic's, making the iconic robotic doppelgänger look like yesterday's news. This is

reinforced when Chaos Sonic's red eyes give off a menacing mood, similar to the Sith Lord Darth Vader from *Star Wars*.

Now that the good parts of this season are covered, it's time to look at the bad. The falling out between Nine and Sonic, for

example. When each of these characters told the other what they wanted to do with the Prism Shards (Sonic wished to restore Green Hill to its normal self, while Nine wanted to reshape the Shatterverse to his own image), they had an argument which resulted in Nine taking the Shards to "The Grimm" - the secret fifth Shatterspace.

When he realized that restoring Green Hill could erase him and the other variants, there had to be another way to fix Sonic's mistake other than that outcome. Captain Dread's greed leading him to betray his crew and avarice taken to its darkest degree possible could be a cruel way to go. It certainly is a dark path to tread.

I give the second part of *Sonic Prime* a 4.8 out of 5. Meanwhile, while I'm looking forward to Season 3, I'm concerned. The show's creators have shown they are not afraid to eliminate characters, and I don't want the variants of Sonic's friends to be erased. Let's hope for the best! If you want to check this series out for yourself, Season 2 of *Sonic Prime* is now streaming on Netflix.



Episode 9 of *Sonic Prime*, "Avoid the Void," is action packed.

Photo by Lucas Werner