

# Ninja Turtle

The Ninja Turtles were the hottest thing in Hollywood. The idea that reptilian animals from the sewer system of New York City, tainted with toxic contaminants, could become the premier crime-fighters in the country was absurd. But try to tell that to the rest of the country. They were the rage. Every kid in America worshiped the green protectors of truth and justice.

Some would think that David was no different from other children his age. As a matter of fact he was significantly worse. Not only did he idolize the Ninja Turtles, he actually believed he was directly related to them. We tried everything but could say or do nothing to convince him otherwise. His speech and behavior became similar to a tortoise. It got to the point where we took David to counseling. Experts tried to convince us that this was perfectly normal. We were told, "not to be concerned. He was a mere boy. Let him enjoy his imagination. Don't stifle his creativity."

Mother was concerned because he would snap at her any time she asked him to do a simple task. I would catch him at times elongating his neck. He started to eat large quantities of lettuce. He became very lethargic and volunteered to be a turtle in the school play. He told his Sunday school teacher he wanted to go on a mission to the Galapagos Islands. Normal? I think not.

At this same time of emulating the Ninja Turtles, David was also developing a strong sense of justice and law. He was concerned that right prevailed and evil be subdued. He would express his profound admiration and respect for people like Judge Judy, Batman and Sheriff Jodie Clemens. He had no disposition to do evil and quivered at the sight of the least amount of sin. His motto, "WWTD" (What would the turtles do) was inscribed with green permanent marker on his forehead.

One day at the dinner table David was visibly sad. Mother picked up on his miserable demeanor immediately. "David, what is wrong", she inquired. Then it happened. David broke down in tears and wept like a baby. "A boy in my school steals candy everyday from the corner store. He brags about it and tries to get other kids to do the same thing. Look at me. Just look at me. I can't do a thing. Do I have green skin like the Ninjas? Look at my wimpy white flesh. Will anyone pay attention to me if I try to stop them? No, no, let's face it, I'm a loser. I'll never be the crime-fighter I want to be." His tiny, little body was trembling. He buried his head in his hands as his body convulsed in giant jerking motions.

Mother was pierced to the center of her heart. What could she do? How could she help her self-doubting David become something? David was feeling lower than whale dung at the bottom of the ocean. How could she help him reach a new level of confidence? She had to do something. Daniel wanted to be a lawyer. Michael wanted to be a doctor. Elizabeth wanted to be a coach, Amanda an artist and Annie a math teacher. So...what is

so bad allowing a child to be what he or she wants to be? Isn't that what a mother should do?

Mom studied up on the rare topic of childhood tortoise metamorphous. Mom and David went to the library and checked out every book available on the subject. They watched National Geographic videos together on turtles. They went to the zoo and observed turtles up close and personal. They drew pictures of turtles and hung them up in David's bedroom along with posters of the Ninja Turtles. They made a sign for David's bedroom door disclosing his new name, "Davatello".

Even though things seemed to be working Mom had one last grand idea to help the dwarfed and deflated ego of her little demented offspring. It would be difficult, but it was the final touch needed to complete the metamorphous her son so desperately needed. Mom's latest studies of some of the leading edge psychologists in the world suggested that a "rebirthing" was needed. David must believe he was born a turtle.

Oh how mother was tormented and tortured with this tortoise-conversion decision. David was her boy. To have him go through life believing he came from a mother turtle was the equivalent of giving him up for adoption. Would he even recognize her as his mother? But, in the final analysis, her decision was selfless and solely in the best interest of her half-shelled, simpleton son.

Mom and David went to a local appliance store where they secured an empty cardboard box. Then it was to the hardware store to purchase four cans of dark green spray paint. Then to Target to buy some green undershorts. All of this in preparation for one of the biggest, most defining and crowning moments in David's life.

The night before Mom sat a David's bedside. "Are you ready David. Tomorrow is the first day of the rest of your turtle life?" "Yes mama", came the quiet answer. Tears welled up in his eyes and streaked down his cheeks. No more needed to be said. In a tender moment best understood by only mother and son, they exchanged a hug and a kiss that left them both comforted and convinced this was the right thing to do.

Saturday David ate a healthy breakfast. Then, taking a deep breath he excused himself from the table and went directly to the garage. With a large pair of scissors he fashioned the cardboard box into the shape of a large turtle. He grabbed the four cans of spray paint and climbed inside the oversized turtle. Once inside, he stripped down to his new green undershorts. Popping off the lid to the first spray paint can he began to cover himself with paint – his arms, his legs, his stomach...all over his albino white body.

Half way through the third can he started to feel light-headed. The fumes from the paint were overtaking him. He began to black out and was flat on his back. About this time there appeared to him one of the most beautiful sight he had ever seen or would ever see in his life. Floating above him was a magnificent tortoise. It spoke to him ever so softly. It was a voice of perfect kindness. "David, my little son. From this time forward you will not be afraid. You have proven yourself and are now worthy to carry on the tradition

of the turtle. Promote turtle truth. From this time on you shall be known as the 'Great White Turtle'. Obey your parents and stand for justice." A smile deepened over David's face. His eyes opened and he immediately sensed a change in his whole being. He was not the same David he use to be.

At that moment Daniel and his friends wandered into the garage. To their great surprise David sprang from his cardboard womb and jump straight into the air. The unsuspecting teenagers were startled at first. What could it be? It was green, semi-naked and strange looking. They did not know whether they should be scared or to laugh or take pity on the green goofball stumbling from the box. Then, to David's great pleasure, one of the boys said, "look, it's a Teenage Ninja Turtle". That was all it took. David leaped from the box and jumped up and down. "It worked, it worked. They know who I really am!"

From that day David was known as "Turtle". He was good luck to the high school basketball team, as they would all rub his head for good luck prior to a game. The power of the turtle has been felt in so many ways over the years. Thanks be to a mother who was so in tune with her son. Thanks to a father that did not strangle the boy while all this nonsense was going on.