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THOR

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THE MIGHTY

THOR™

SUDDENLY...THE CELESTIALS!



When DR. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking-stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic hammer MJOLNIR—and the lame physician is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm, Lord of the Living Lightning—and heir to the throne of eternal Asgard...

Stan Lee PRESENTS: **THE MIGHTY THOR!**

SUDDENLY -- THE CELESTIALS!

MEXICO CITY: MORE THAN A MILE HIGH, AND IN ITS WAY MORE THAN A THOUSAND YEARS OLD.

ONCE THE AZTEC CAPITAL CALLED TENOCHTITLAN, STANDING ON AN ISLE IN THE MIST OF LAKE TEXCOCO, IT IS TODAY A SPRAWLING METROPOLIS OF MORE THAN 5,000,000 SOULS.

SOME OF THESE ARE LESS CONSIDERATE THAN OTHERS-- AND LESS LUCKY, AS THEY'LL DISCOVER WHEN THEY GLANCE OVER THEIR SHOULDERS--!

¡PRONTO, RAMON!

¡SI, LUIS! ¡YO VOY!



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FOR SOME THINGS, NO TRANSLATION IS NECESSARY.

¡MIRA ALLÍ!

¡YO LO MIRO!
¡ES EL HEROE
AMERICANO
THOR!

¡TIRA!
¡TIRA!

THY TONGUE BE
NOT ONE SPOKEN
IN DISTANT
ASGARD,
VILLAIN.

¡BTAM!

STILL IT
DOTH TAKE
NO SCHOLAR
TO DIVINE
THINE INTENT
TOWARD ME...

¿QUE-?

AND, IN SOOTH, I
LIKE IT NOT!

¡LUIS! ¡MATA
EL!

¡UNNNGH!

¡NO TE
PREOCUPE!
¡YO ME ENCARGO!
¡DE EL...!

¡VOTO A
DIOS!

¡EL
MARTILLO...
GIRANDO!

SURRENDER, VARLET...
ERE THOU DOST ANGER
THE SON OF ODIN!

RATTA
RATTA
RATTA

¡MIS BALAS
NO LOGRAN
PASAR!

¡KPING!

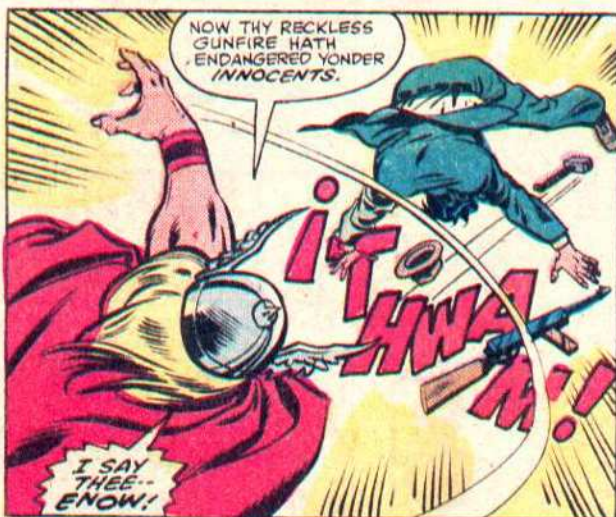
¡ZING!

¡CUIDADO, TODOS!
¡LAS BALAS
REBOTAN!

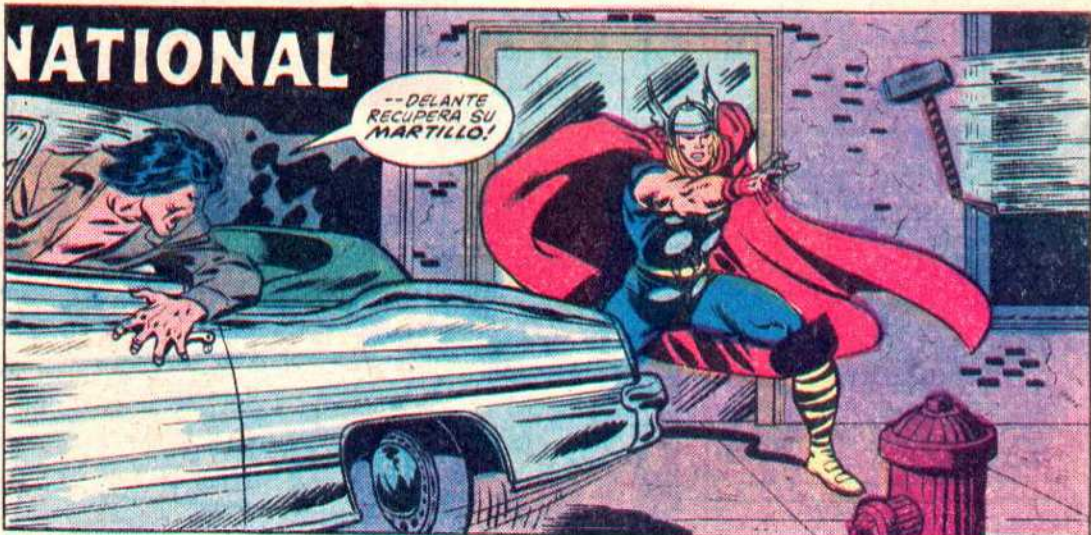
DESPITE THE POLICEMAN'S WARNING, HOWEVER,
THE CROWD-- LIKE CROWDS IN EVERY AGE AND
CLIME-- SEEMS ALMOST MORE FASCINATED
THAN REPELLED BY THE ONGOING VIOLENCE--
TILL, SUDDENLY--

¡AAAAGH!

¡EL ESTA
HERIDO!



ONE OF THE MODERN-DAY DESPERADOES, NOW-
EVER, HAS REACHED THE GANG'S CONVERTIBLE,
AND--



FLYING M-JOLNIR AND HURTLING AUTO REACH THE GOLDEN-HAIRED SCION OF ASGARD AT PRECISELY THE SAME INSTANT...!



YET, EVEN AS THE FRANTIC BANK-ROBBER STEPS ON THE GAS--



--HE ABRUPTLY DISCOVERS THAT HIS CAR IS MOVING NOT FORWARD--



-- BUT UPWARD --



METHINKS E'EN MY LIMITED COMMAND OF SPANISH BE ENOW TO KNOW WHAT THOU DOST SAY, MORTAL.

THOU DOST WANT OUT, DOST THOU NOT?





THE DANGER ENDED NOW, THE HUMAN THROGS PRESS FORWARD, ONLY TO ENCOUNTER--

STAND YE BACK, MEN OF MIDGARD!

SWOOSH

TIME ENOW HAVE I WASTED IN BATTLE WITH EVIL MEN OF LITTLE DREAMS.

*MIDGARD= EARTH. -- ROY.



NOW, I BE ELSE-WHERE BOUND!

'TIS BEYOND BELIEF! I-- OFFSPRING OF ODIN, AND PRINCE OF ASGARD-- FORCED TO EXPEND PRECIOUS MOMENTS IN DEFENSE OF MERE WEALTH--

-- WHILE ENGAGED IN A MISSION 'PON WHICH DOTH REST THE FATE OF EARTH ITSELF!



IN SOOTH, 'T WAS MY DECISION TO INTERVENE-- MORE TO SAVE LIVES THAN PESOS.

STILL, THAT UNEVEN COMBAT MERELY REMINDED ME HOW FAR I HAVE COME, OF LATE--

-- FROM THOSE DAYS WHEN I WAS GREATLY CONCERNED WITH MATTERS MORE BETFITTING A SO-CALLED "SUPERHERO."



NOW, 'T IS MORE COSMIC CONCERNS WHICH DO VEX ME.

THUS, THOUGH I BE SELF-EXILED FROM GLEAMING ASGARD--

-- STILL, I AM SORE TROUBLED-- AND, THOUGH I LIKE IT NOT--



-- I WOULD AND MUST SPEAK WITH FATHER ODIN!

TWICE THOR STAMPS HIS MYSTIC UIRU HAMMER UPON THE QUIVERING MOUNTAIN-PEAK...

THUMP THUMP



AND, WITHIN SECONDS, DARK STORM-CLOUDS BEGIN TO FORM WITH AMAZING SWIFTESS ABOVE A WIDE AREA WHICH INCLUDES NEARBY MEXICO CITY.

SKIES WHICH A MINUTE AGO WERE CLEAR NOW RUMBLE WITH OMINOUS, BROODING THUNDER...

...AND A CERTAIN JAGGED PEAK NOW WITNESSES WHAT SEEMS THE FURY OF THE UNLEASHED ELEMENTS...!



ALL-FATHER!
'TIS I WHO DO
CALL UPON THEE--
THOR, GOD OF THUNDER, AND LORD OF THE LIVING LIGHTNING!

COME TO ME,
I BESEECH THEE--
IF THOU HAST YET
REMAINING ANY
LOVE FOR THINE
ONLY **BLOOD-SON!**

NEXT INSTANT, THE VERY HEAVENS SEEM TO SPLIT ASUNDER, AND--



WHY HAST THOU CALLED OUT TO ME, MY ONCE-HEIR--

--WHEN THOU HAST **FLED** THE REALM ETERNAL, AND I IN TURN HAVE FOREER **DENIED** IT THEE?

THY WORDS BE WRAPPED ROUND ABOUT WITH **ANGER, SIRE.**



YET, NO ILL WILL DO I BEAR THEE! I BUT WISH ANSWERS TO--



ANSWERS!? BY WHAT RIGHT DOST THOU DEMAND ANSWERS OF **ODIN THE ONE-EYED?**

HAST THOU DECIDED AT LAST TO **OBEY** ME-- AND TO RENOUNCE THINE UN-DESERVED ALLEGIANCE TO THE MUDBALL CALLED **EARTH?**

WILT THOU RETURN FOR ALL TIME TO **ASGARD**-- TO ADD THINE HAMMER AND THY GOOD RIGHT ARM TO HER POWER--

--RATHER THAN **DIVIDE** THINE EFFORTS FRUITLESSLY 'TWTIX US AND MIDGARD?



WELL? **SPEAK, MY SON!**

I CAN **ANSWER, SIRE,** ONLY BY **REPEATING** MY SEVERAL QUESTIONS...

SEVERAL, NOW!? VERILY, MOMENT BY MOMENT, THINE IMPUDENCE DOETH **GROW!**

FIRST, I WOULD KNOW THE WHY AND WHEREFORE OF MINE INTEREST IN THE AFFAIRS OF **EARTH...**

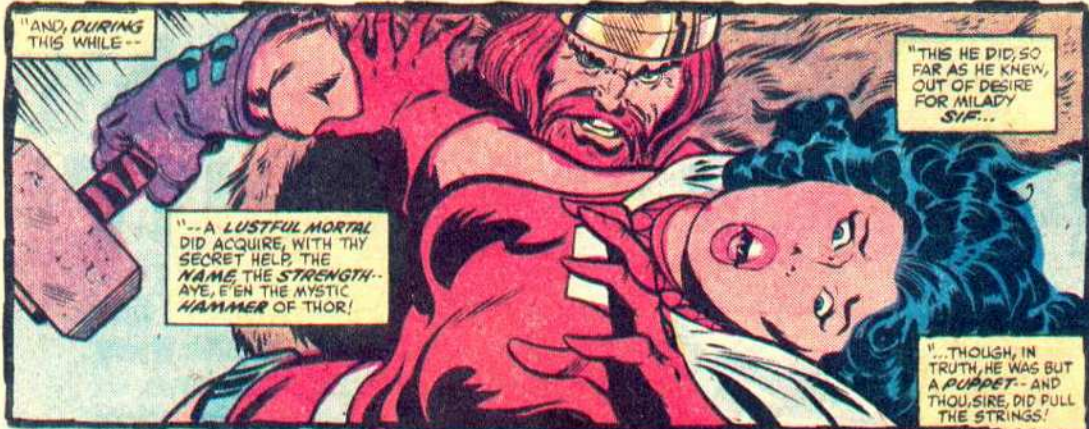


I KNOW THAT I BE **TRULY ASGARDIAN BORN--**

--THOUGH THOU HAST NE'ER SEEN FIT TO TELL ME THE IDENTITY OF **MINE OWN MOTHER!**

I KNOW, LIKEWISE, THAT I BE **NOT** OF **EARTH** AT ALL--



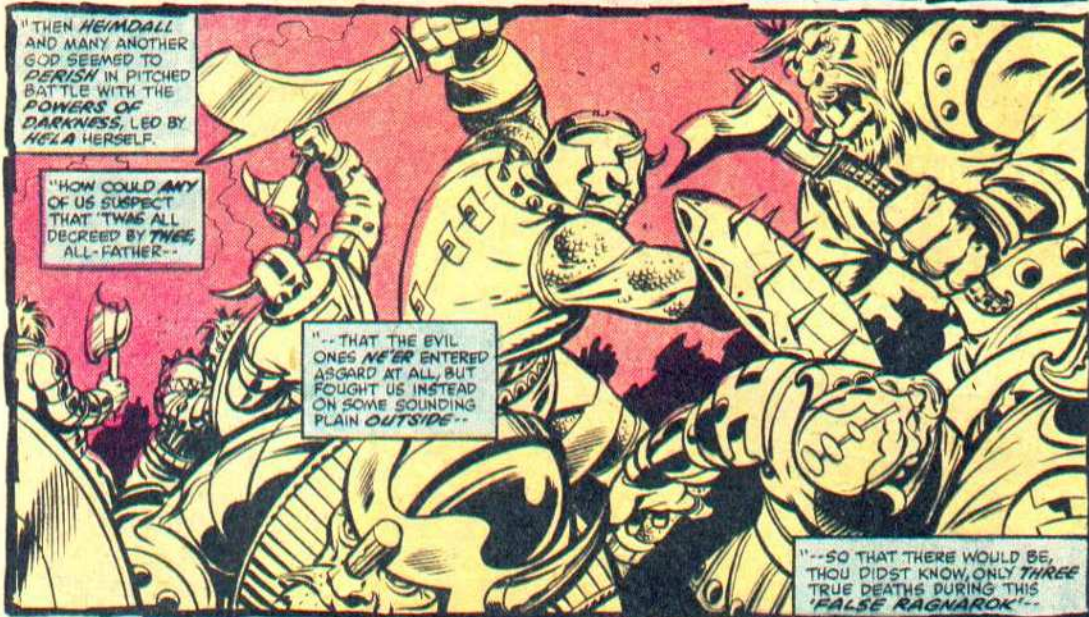


"AND, DURING THIS WHILE--"

"-- A LUSTFUL MORTAL DID ACQUIRE, WITH THY SECRET HELP THE NAME THE STRENGTH-- AYE, E'EN THE MYSTIC HAMMER OF THOR!

"THIS HE DID, SO FAR AS HE KNEW, OUT OF DESIRE FOR MILADY SIF..."

"...THOUGH, IN TRUTH, HE WAS BUT A PUPPET-- AND THOU, SIRE, DID PULL THE STRINGS!"



"THEN HEIMDALL AND MANY ANOTHER GOD SEEMED TO PERISH IN PITCHED BATTLE WITH THE POWERS OF DARKNESS, LED BY HELA HERSELF."

"HOW COULD ANY OF US SUSPECT THAT 'T' WAS ALL DECREED BY THEE ALL-FATHER--"

"-- THAT THE EVIL ONES N'ER ENTERED ASGARD AT ALL, BUT FOUGHT US INSTEAD ON SOME SOUNDING PLAIN OUTSIDE--"

"-- SO THAT THERE WOULD BE, THOU DIDST KNOW, ONLY THREE TRUE DEATHS DURING THIS 'FALSE RAGNAROK'--"



"-- TWO OF WHICH WERE MORTALS, INCLUDING HE WHO HAD BECOME THE SECOND THOR."

"NOW I DO KNOW THAT THOU DIDST HELP HIM WREST MY POWERS AND MY IDENTITY SO THAT HE, NOT I, WOULD DIE IN FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY..."

"... AND I AM ASHAMED FOR IT."



"YET, THOUGH ALL THE OTHER ASGARDIANS ROSE, UNHARMED, WHEN THE DAY OF STRIFE WAS DONE-- STILL ONE DID NOT."

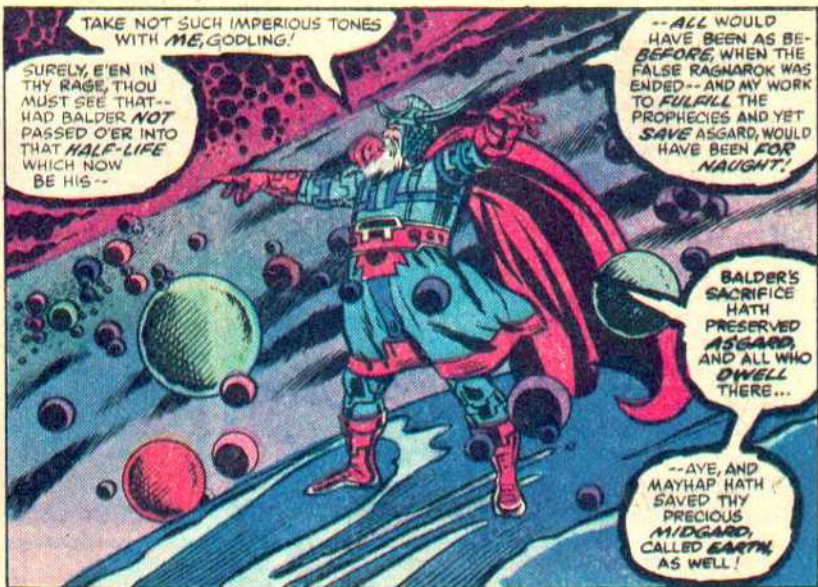
"BALDER-- HE, THE MOST NOBLE OF ALL-- HIS BRAVE LIFE SUSTAINED E'EN NOW ONLY BY THE SACRED ODINFLEAME!"

"FOR, ON THAT DAY HE BOTH TRULY PERISH-- IT SHALL BE THE TRUE RAGNAROK WHICH SHALL INESCAPABLY BEFALL ASGARD!"



WHY, FATHER? WHY COULDEST THOU NOT HAVE SAVED BALDER, ALSO-- AS THOU DIDST SAVE SO MANY OTHERS THAT DIRE DAY?

I WOULD KNOW WHY!!



TAKE NOT SUCH IMPERIOUS TONES WITH ME, GODLING!

SURELY, E'EN IN THY RAGE, THOU MUST SEE THAT-- HAD BALDER NOT PASSED O'ER INTO THAT HALF-LIFE WHICH NOW BE HIS--

-- ALL WOULD HAVE BEEN AS BEFORE, WHEN THE FALSE RAGNAROK WAS ENDED-- AND MY WORK TO FULFILL THE PROPHECIES AND YET SAVE ASGARD, WOULD HAVE BEEN FOR NAUGHT!

BALDER'S SACRIFICE HATH PRESERVED ASGARD, AND ALL WHO DWELL THERE...

-- AYE, AND MAYHAP HATH SAVED THY PRECIOUS MIDGARD, CALLED EARTH, AS WELL!



"MAYHAP" SAVED IT,?

MAYHAP.

THOU DOST KNOW MORE THAN THOU WILT SAY, ALL-FATHER!

AND, I WOULD KNOW ONE THING MORE NOW THAT I THINK ON IT--



WHAT DOST THOU KNOW OF ENTITIES CALLED CELESTIALS-- MIGHTY SPACE-GODS, TALLER THAN MOUNTAINS, WHO E'EN NOW HAVE BEGUN A FIFTY-YEAR JUDGMENT WHICH, 'TIS SAID, WILL DECIDE THE DESTINY OF EARTH??

BUT, ODIN MAKES NO MOVE TO ANSWER... SO THOR GOES ON!



" 'T WAS, I KNOW NOW, A MILLENNIUM AGO THAT I DID ENCOUNTER, FAR SOUTH OF HERE, BEINGS CALLED ETERNALS... LED BY VALIANT VIRAKO AND STOLID VALKIN.

" I' LEARNED LITTLE FROM THEM, BUT THAT THEY WERE CREATIONS OF THESE CELESTIALS.



" THEY DID CLAIM THAT THEY, AND MORTAL MEN, AND YET A THIRD RACE, WERE ALL EVOLVED FROM SPECIES CREATED BY THE CELESTIALS-- WHO WOULD COME TO JUDGE EARTH, IF 'T WOULD LIVE OR DIE, AT A LATER DAY.

" I MIGHT HAVE LEARNED MORE IN TIME, BUT WAS FORCED INSTEAD TO DO BATTLE WITH ONE WHOM THE ANCIENT INCAS DID WORSHIP AS THEIR OWN THUNDER DEITY. "

* AS SEEN IN THOR ANNUAL #7. -- ROY.



"VIRAKO HIMSELF DID PERISH IN DESTROYING THE MONSTROUS RAINBOW WORM WHICH LIKewise SPRUNG UP--

"--OR RATHER, HIS ATOMS WERE SCATTERED, FOR ETERNALS CANNOT PERISH-- THEY SAY.



"I, IN TURN, DID DEFEAT DROMEDAN, THE BEING WHO DID CONTROL THE OTHERS.

"HE WAS A MUTATE, 'T WAS SAID--

"--EVIL CREATION OF THAT THIRD RACE, CALLED THE DEVIANTS, OF WHICH THE ETERNALS HAD SPOKEN BEFORE.



"GOOD WALKIN THEN DECLARED HIMSELF FATHER, AS WELL AS UNCLE, TO VIRAKO'S ABSENT SON IKARIS--

"-- TO THE DISPLEASURE, I AM SURE, OF HIS OWN OFFSPRING DRUIG.

"THEN WOULD I HAVE PRESSED TO LEARN MORE OF THESE CELESTIALS--



"-- AND WHERE THE ETERNALS WOULD STAND, IF THE TOWERING SPACE-GODS DECIDED ONE DAY TO ANNIHILATE THE PLANET WHICH NURTURED US ALL.

"JUST THEN, A GREAT SHADOW FELL OVER US:

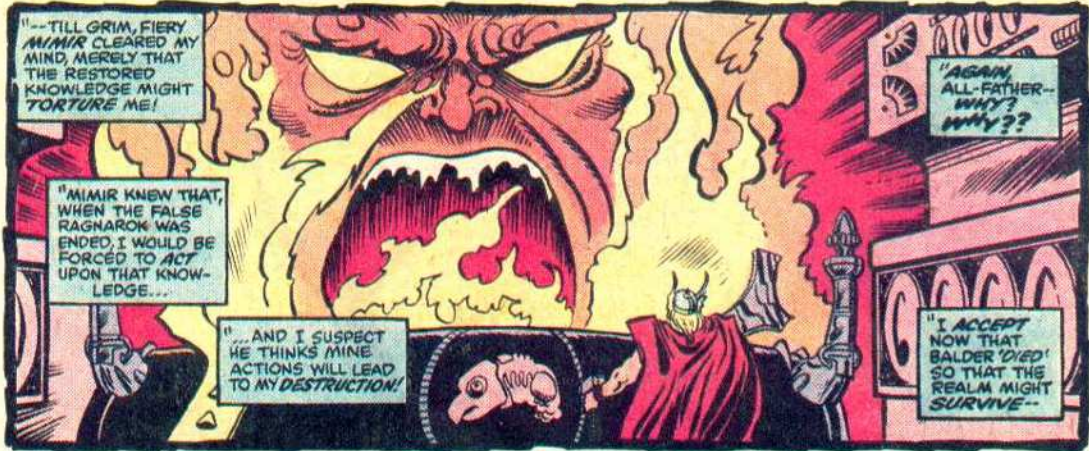
"THE MAMMOTH STARCRAFT OF THE CELESTIALS, I AM CERTAIN!



"ANXIOUS THAT I NOT OPPOSE THE CELESTIALS, VALKIN AND HIS FELLOW ETERNAL ALTAH DID HYPNOTIZE ME-- FILLED MY MIND WITH FALSE MEMORIES--

"--AND I SOARED OFF, BACK TOWARD ASGARD, EVEN AS THE CELESTIALS DID LAND FOR A SUPPOSED THIRD TIME UPON EARTH!

"NOR DID I RECALL ANY OF MY SOJOURN AMONGST THE ETERNALS IN THE LAND NOW CALLED MIDDGARD FOR A THOUSAND YEARS--



"--TILL GRIM, FIERY MIMIR CLEARED MY MIND, MERELY THAT THE RESTORED KNOWLEDGE MIGHT TORTURE ME!

"MIMIR KNEW THAT, WHEN THE FALSE RAGNAROK WAS ENDED, I WOULD BE FORCED TO ACT UPON THAT KNOWLEDGE...

"... AND I SUSPECT HE THINKS MINE ACTIONS WILL LEAD TO MY DESTRUCTION!

"AGAIN, ALL-FATHER-- WHY? WHY??"

"I ACCEPT NOW THAT BALDER 'DIED' SO THAT THE REAL I MIGHT SURVIVE--"



BUT WHY DO THE EARTH MEAN SO MUCH TO ME-- A SON OF ASGARD?

AND WHO ARE THE CELESTIALS-- THE ETERNALS-- AND WHAT KNOWS THOU OF THEM??



IF THOR COULD SEE PAST HIS OWN RAGE, HE WOULD NOTICE PERHAPS THAT THERE IS TORMENT WITHOUT EQUAL IN THE FACE OF HIS SIRE.

LORD ODIN OPENS HIS MOUTH, AS IF TO SPEAK.

THEN, AS IF HE THINKS BETTER OF IT...



...HE ABRUPTLY VANISHES INSTEAD!

AND THE THUNDER GOD'S WRATH IS CHANGED, IN A FLEETING INSTANT--



-- TO SORROW, THIS LITTLE IT SEEMS, DOTH MINE OWN FATHER THINK OF ME...!



THEN-- FATHER NO MORE!

THE AUDIENCE IS ENDED-- SO LET THE STORM ABATE, AS WELL!

THUMP THUMP THUMP



AND, IN NOT-FAR-DISTANT MEXICO CITY...

¡EL TEMESTAD HAVÉ PASADO!

¡MIO DIOS! ¿QUE HARÉ AL LADO EN LOCO MONDO?

NO APARCAMIENTO

AS FOR THE INSTIGATOR OF THESE UNIQUE METEOROLOGICAL EVENTS: HE IS ALREADY STRIKING SOUTHWARD, PROPELLED BY HIS MYSTIC HAMMER...



...OVER THE INWARD CURVE OF THE PACIFIC OCEAN, AND TOWARD THE SKY-THRUSTING PEAKS OF THE GREAT ANDES MOUNTAINS IN SOUTH AMERICA.

ONLY THERE WILL THIS AGE-OLD MYSTERY BE SOLVED-- IF AT ALL!

SOON AFTERWARD, ABOARD A CERTAIN U.S. JETLINER



HOLY--! YOU SEE WHAT I SAW, PHIL?

I-- THINK I DID, DAVE, BUT--

I SAW IT TOO, CAPTAIN! IT WAS-- A MAN--



-- BUT HE WAS FLYING FASTER THAN THE SPEED OF SOUND!

'TIS MOST UNUSUAL FOR A PLANE TO BE HERE, METHINKS.

YET, THEY SEEM IN FULL CONTROL OF THEIR CRAFT-- AND I'VE NO TIME TO WASTE, SO--!



WHILE INSIDE--

WHAT WAS THAT-- SOME KIND OF UFO?!

I-- I CERTAINLY HOPE NOT! I'M HERE FOR A VACATION, NOT A CLOSE ENCOUNTER!

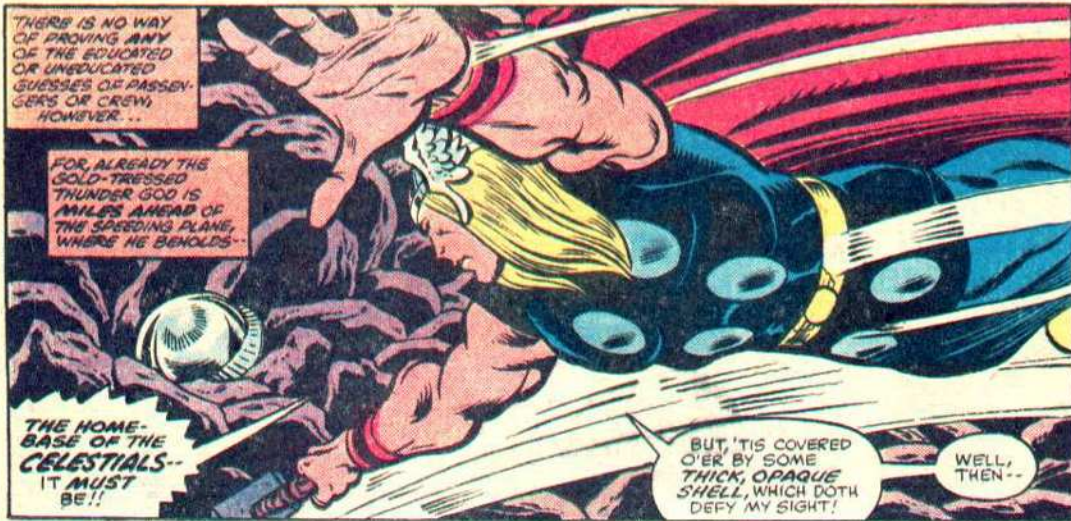
AT LEAST, NOT OF THAT KIND!

IT WAS THOR, I TELL YA!

I SEEN HIM ONCE BEFORE, BACK IN NEW YORK!'

THERE IS NO WAY OF PROVING ANY OF THE EDUCATED OR UNEDUCATED GUESSES OF PASSENGERS OR CREW, HOWEVER...

FOR, ALREADY THE GOLD-TRESSED THUNDER GOD IS MILES AHEAD OF THE SPEEDING PLANE, WHERE HE BEHOLDS



THE HOME-BASE OF THE CELESTIALS-- IT MUST BE!!

BUT, 'TIS COVERED O'ER BY SOME THICK, OPAQUE SHELL, WHICH DOTH DEFY MY SIGHT!

WELL, THEN--





-- AND NOW THIS!?

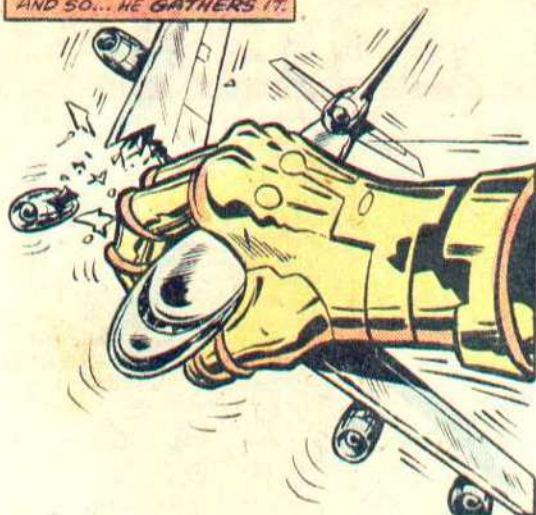
GAMMEHON, OF THE FOURTH MOST, STANDS LIKE ONE MORE MOUNTAIN AMONG MOUNTAINS--

-- RISING SOME 3000 FEET INTO THE SKY, TO LOOK WITH COLD, INSCRUTABLE MAJESTY AT THIS METAL INSECT WHICH HAS WANDERED, UNINVITED, INTO THE TERRITORY CONTROLLED BY THE CELESTIALS.

EACH OF THE CELESTIALS HAS HIS OWN SPECIAL TASK-- AND GAMMEHON IS A GATHERER, ONE WHO HARVESTS CROPS OF LIVING THINGS FOR STUDY AND ANALYSIS BY OTHERS OF HIS STAR-SPAWNED KIND.

THOUGH HIS FELLOW CELESTIALS HAVE SEEN MANY AIRCRAFT UP CLOSE, IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE WORLD, THIS IS THE FIRST SUCH THAT GAMMEHON HAS SEEN IN HIS THREE YEARS UPON THIS PALTRY PLANET'S SURFACE...

AND SO... HE GATHERS IT.



THE RESULTS INSIDE ARE IMMEDIATE... AND DRAMATIC.



EEEEEE! WH-WHAT'S HAPPENING?

A CRASH! WE'RE GOING TO CRASH!!

THE TRUTH, HOWEVER, IS EVEN MORE STARTLING...

...AS THE GOLDEN LEVIATHAN OUTSIDE HOLDS AND EXAMINES THE HAPLESS JETLINER AS AN INNOCENT CHILD MIGHT A NEW TOY.



OR IS HE MORE LIKE A MERCILESS CHILD, WHO TEARS THE WINGS OFF HELPLESS FLIES?

BY HEIMDALL'S HORN!



THAT CELESTIAL, SUCH AS MIMIR, DID SHOW TO ME-- HE PASSED RIGHT THROUGH THE IMPENETRABLE DOME-- TO GRASP YONDER PLANE!

BUT-- THAT GAPING HOLE HE HATH MADE IN ITS SIDE-- THE PRESSURE CHANGE WILL--!

MAY! THOR SHALL ACT-- E'EN IF IT MEAN MY PRESENCE HERE BE KNOWN TO THOSE I SEEK!



IF THY RE-INFORCED DOME WITHSTANDS SOMEHOW MINE HAMMER, MONSTER-- MAYHAP THOU WILT NOT!

CITIES HAVE TOPPLED, AND COSMIC-POWERED SUPER-VILLAINS GONE DOWN LIKE NEW-MOWN GRASS, BEFORE THE THUNDEROUS, HEAVEN-FORGED POWER OF MJOLNIR--



BUT, GAMMENON IS NOT SUCH AS THEY...

AND THE SOLE RESULT OF THOR'S PUSSANT BLOW IS A HEAD TURNED UPON SOME INNER SILENT, CYCLOPSAN SHIVEL--

BY THE GLEAMING APPLES OF IDUNN!



-- AND A HAND, LARGE ENOUGH TO CRUSH AN AIRCRAFT CARRIER SWEEPING ACROSS THE SKY LIKE THE SHADOW OF DOOM!

LARGE THOU MAYEST BE, CELESTIAL -- AND STRONG -- AYE, AND E'EN FAST--

YET, THOU SHALT NOT LAY HANDS UPON THE GOD OF THUNDER!



TZZSSH!

IT IS NOT, HOWEVER, THE GATHERER'S INTENTION TO TOUCH THIS CURIOUS SPECIMEN-- THE FIRST SUPER-POWERED BEING HE HAS ENCOUNTERED WHO IS NEITHER ETERNAL NOR DEVIANT.

NO, NOT TO TOUCH--



-- BUT TO MAKE HELPLESS--

-- OR, FAILING THAT, TO DESTROY

BUT ONLY IF ALL ELSE FAILS.

THWOOOM!

BLINDING LIGHTNING MINGLES MADLY WITH THE POWER OF THE COSMIC UNBOUND ON EARTH-- TO FILL THE SKY WITH A GLARE LIKE THAT OF A MULTITUDE OF H-BOMBS...

THEN, WHEN THE BLAZING LIGHT HAS FADED, AND EARTH AND HEAVENS HAVE CEASED THEIR TREMBLING--



--ONLY A WRITHING SPIRAL OF EXPANDED, DYING ENERGY EXISTS WHERE LATELY THOR DID STAND.

GOOD LORD! I-- I THINK THAT WAS THOR OUT THERE-- YOU KNOW, THE SUPERHERO FROM THE STATES--

--AND THAT THING ZAPPED HIM TO NOTHING, LIKE HE WAS MARY WORTH!

OR US, DAVE...



AS FOR GAMMENON: HE LOOKS ON WITH WHAT MAY BE A MILD REGRET AT THIS WASTE OF WHAT WAS DOUBTLESS A MOST INTERESTING SPECIMEN OF LIFE.



STILL, THERE WILL PERHAPS BE OTHERS, IN TIME.

RATHER THAN DESTROY, HE PREFERS TO PRESERVE-- TO PROTECT--

--AS HIS AURA HAS DONE TO THOSE WITHIN THE PLANE HE HOLDS--



--PREVENTING THEIR DEATHS DUE TO SUDDEN LOSS OF OXYGEN AND EXTREME PRESSURE CHANGE.

NOW, HE PASSES THROUGH THE HEMISPHERE AGAIN, AS IF IT WERE NOT THERE...



AND ANYONE WATCHING : COULD SEE THAT GARGANTUAN AS HE IS, HE IS STILL DWARFED BY THAT WHITELY GLEAMING DOME.

AYE... IF ANYONE WERE WATCHING.

BUT, NO ONE IS...



...UNLESS PERHAPS IT BE ALL-FATHER ODIN, A WORLD AND TIME AWAY!

NEXT. THE CITY OF THE SPACE-GODS!



SPECIAL NORDIC NOTE: With this issue, the team that produced THOR #276 (Roy Thomas, John Buscema, and Chic Stone) returns to chronicle the adventures of everybody's favorite thunder god. And to celebrate that return, Roy and John have begun an epic storyline continuing where the almost universally-lauded THOR ANNUAL #7 left off—featuring the Eternals, that cosmic conception of Jack Kirby's a couple of annus back!

Meanwhile, it seemed appropriate to accompany "Suddenly, the Celestials!" with a letters-column dealing with THOR ANNUAL #7, which led directly (or indirectly, depending upon your point of view) into THOR #283...!

Dear Roy,

THOR ANNUAL #7, "And Ever—the Eternals!" was excellent. It established the connecting links between Kirby's Eternals and the rest of the Marvel Universe that was always needed in that series. By disassociating them with the Olympian gods—establishing that Zuras and the rest are interesting parallels, but not the originals—while establishing that the Eternals were the original Inca, Aztec, and Mayan gods—you've allowed an interesting variant upon Thor clashing with another group of gods. Since it has been established that the Eternals were many and various, and as differentiated by race as humans are, you might establish that the ancient Japanese gods were also Eternals.

The meeting with Ikaris' father, Druig, and Valkin was splendidly done, as was the Coming of the Third Host. I was likewise intrigued by the idea of Thor's going to North America, a country the Eternals seem to have ignored. There were many good figures in North American mythology that would make good opponents.

Remember the X-Men's old foe, El Tigre, who turned into Kukulcan? You should, since you invented him. Well, I assume that the "mystic" stone he appropriated was a project of Eternal super-science. You might have him return to fight Thor, only to have the fight ended when Ikaris comes to reclaim his father's medallion.

I would also like you, Roy, to encourage other writers at Marvel to use some of the elements of the Eternals books in their magazines. For instance: the Celestials, who influenced mankind's evolution, might also be behind the evolution of the Kree, Zenn-La, and other humanoid races. They might not be the mightiest of all aliens, but they very well might be the eldest—the first race to arise in the newborn universe. It would offer an interesting explanation of why so many races resemble earthlings: They are all products of Celestial experimentation.

Of course, I would not advise the revival of the ETERNALS series itself. But I hope to see them again in THOR from time to time—as we occasionally see the Olympian gods. Perhaps you might even encourage team-ups of the Eternals and the Thing or Spider-Man in MARVEL TEAM-UP or TWO-IN ONE, now that it has finally been established just where the Eternals are in relation to the Marvel Universe.

Al Schroeder III
2207 Old Hickory Rd.
Nashville, TN 37215

And doubtless the Eternals will appear in various Marvel mags in the future, Al. However, when he began to plot THOR ANNUAL #7 and the series which begins with this issue, Roy's one concern was that the Eternals not be used in TEAM-UP, etc., for the duration of the current THOR storyline, in order to avoid confusion. We all agreed totally that King Kirby's cataclysmic creation was too vital, too dynamic, to be split up into fragments for guest-star appearances until the entire series had been brought into the Marvel Universe. So, since the plotline which begins this issue will continue for some time to

come, we'll table your last suggestion for the present.

Dear Roy,

What they said was that it *shouldn't* be done.

I don't believe anyone ever argued that the Eternals *couldn't* fit into the Marvel Universe. Heck, this is the same company that gave us Spider-Man and Dracula in the same magazine. The argument was that, for very basic reasons, the Eternals didn't and shouldn't.

The operating fallacy at Marvel is that all things must be made to fit into the same reality... no matter how idiotic or absurd the result. I've said it before, and I'll say it again: An alternate reality is also in part defined by the things it does *not* include. Case in point being the Eternals.

In the beginning, the Marvel Universe was a world much like our own. The only difference was that science sometimes went a little crazy and produced beings with supernatural powers. In that environment it wasn't at all difficult to accept the existence of magic as well. But the key point was that the "superheroes" and "super-villains" lived in and reacted to a world like the one we lived in and reacted to.

Not so the Universe of the Eternals. In that world, from the very beginning, things were different. Mankind owed its very existence to beings from beyond space. Beings with para-normal abilities were not aberrations; whole cultures of Eternals and Deviants shared the planet with humanity, giving rise to human civilizations and sparking the half-remembered legends of the gods. These "Eternals" did not live in a world like the one we lived in, nor could we identify with them. We *could* observe them with interest and marvel at Jack Kirby's overblown sense of the fantastic.

In short, where the Marvel Universe differed from the "real" world in detail, the Eternals' Universe differed in degree. The two concepts were not only different in conception, they were different in execution.

And now, *ex post facto*, for the sake of an illusionary conception of continuity (which is, strangely enough, exactly the opposite of maintaining a consistent story—the true meaning of continuity), we're being told that the Marvel Universe was really the Eternals' Universe all along. The Kirby concept of the Eternals, Celestials, and Deviants deserves to be better developed, yes. *But on its own terms*, not grafted onto a diametrically-opposed reality like the mainstream Marvel Universe. Gads! It's like doing a story to establish that the Fantastic Four are really androids and always have been.

To my mind, the Eternals are not and never have been part of the Marvel Universe. And no matter how many times they appear with a Marvel superhero, those stories will all be apocryphal. There's no way to rationalize the Eternals in the Marvel Universe short of sacrificing the integrity of both creations.

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And, while respecting and appreciating your viewpoint, Dennis, both Roy and Jim (representing past and present editors-in-chief) must disagree almost totally. The areas of disagreement, however, will probably make up a goodly portion of the THOR letters-pages for the next several months, so we won't go into detail just now. Suffice it to say that Stan, Roy, and Jim consider the ETERNALS series' current incorporation into THOR as valid—and shouldn't they know? If we've gained the enthusiastic support of guys like Ralph Macchio (who wrote, like yourself, a well-reasoned argument against such an action way back in the early days of THE ETERNALS) and Mark Gruenwald (who's even published a quality fanzine on the subject of continuity and alternate universes), maybe we'll eventually trick a few kind words out of D. Mallonee, as well.