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MARVEL® COMICS GROUP

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THE  
MIGHTY

# THOR

**FURY** OF THE  
FORGOTTEN HERO!

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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!**

## **FURY OF THE FORGOTTEN HERO!**

YOU ASK WHERE WE ARE, THUNDER GOD?

WE ARE BACK ON BOARD THE MOTHERSHIP OF THE CELESTIALS—AND THERE IS HE WHO TELEPORTED US HERE!

BY THE HARROWING HORN OF HEIMDALL!

THEN, THIS TOWERING TITAN WHICH DOOTH LOOM OER US BOTH—

AYE, ASGARDIAN...

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LG511

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...HE IS THE MASTER OF THE FOURTH HOST:

THE ONE ABOVE ALL!

MERE MOMENTS AGO, WE DID BATTLE IN THE ARENA OF OLYMPIA AMID THE MOUNTAINS OF THE PLANET EARTH...



NOW, WE STAND HUNDREDS OF MILES OUT IN THE SEA CALLED SPACE... WHERE THE PRIME CELESTIAL DESIRES THAT WE SHOULD CONTINUE OUR PITCHED COMBAT.

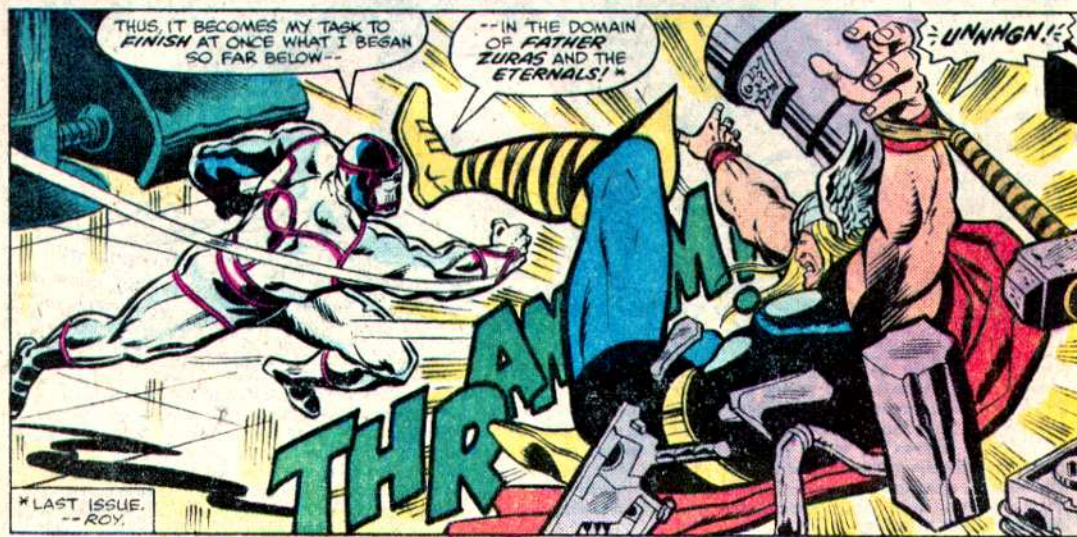
I SAY THESE MAY THOU ONCE-ETERNAL WHO NOW DOTH CALL THYSELF ONLY "HERO"...



'TIS WITH YON MAMMOTH SPACE GOD THAT THOU MUST DEAL... NOT WITH THEE, WHO BE MERELY HIS CREATION.

THERE IS LOGIC IN WHAT YOU SAY, SON OF ODIN.

BUT THE ONE ABOVE ALL, ALAS, HAS NO WISH TO DEAL DIRECTLY WITH YOU.



THUS, IT BECOMES MY TASK TO FINISH AT ONCE WHAT I BEGAN SO FAR BELOW--

--IN THE DOMAIN OF FATHER ZURAS AND THE ETERNALS!\*

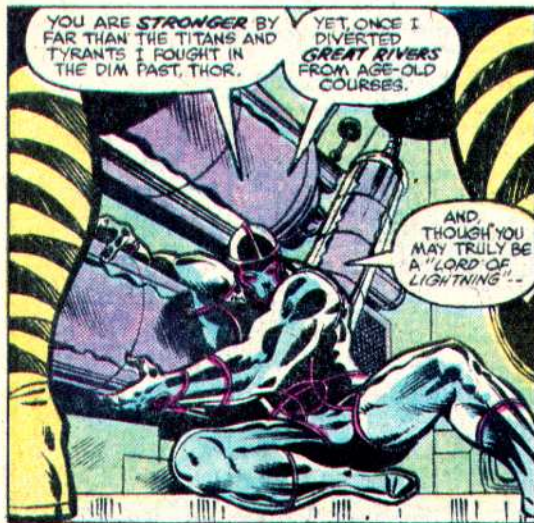
UNNNGN!

\*LAST ISSUE. --ROY.









YOU ARE STRONGER BY FAR THAN THE TITANS AND TYRANTS I FOUGHT IN THE DIM PAST, THOR.

YET, ONCE I DIVERTED GREAT RIVERS FROM AGE-OLD COURSES.

AND, THOUGH YOU MAY TRULY BE A "LORD OF LIGHTNING" --

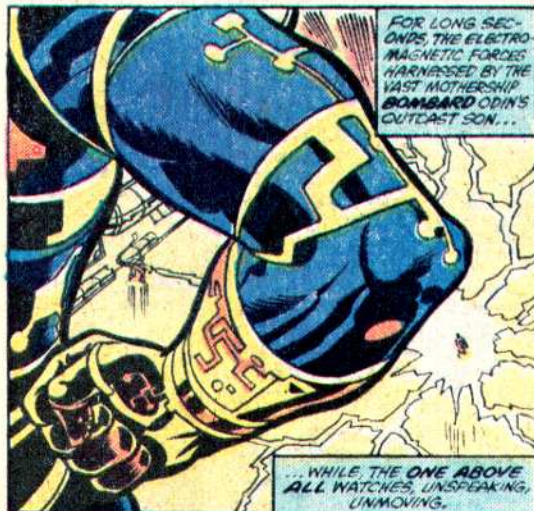


-- STILL, I CAN DIRECT THE POWERS OF THE VERY FUSIONMENT WHICH FLOW THROUGH THE METAL VEINS OF THIS GIGANTIC STARCRAFT --

-- TURNING YOUR OWN LIFEFORCE AGAINST YOU!

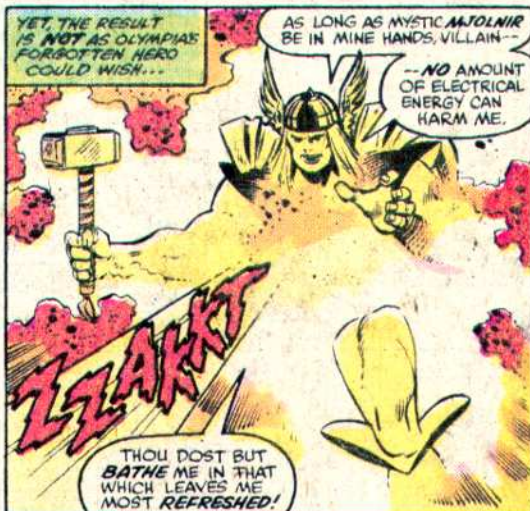
GODS OF ASGARD!

RR! PP



FOR LONG SECONDS, THE ELECTRO-MAGNETIC FORCES HARNESSSED BY THE VAST MOTHERSHIP BOMBARD ODIN'S OUTCAST SON...

WHILE THE ONE ABOVE ALL WATCHES, UNSPEAKING, UNMOVING.



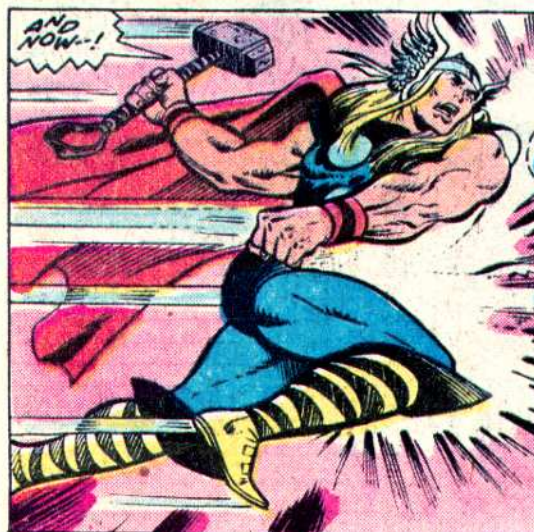
YET, THE RESULT IS NOT AS OLYMPIAN'S FORGOTTEN HERO COULD WISH...

AS LONG AS MYSTIC Mjolnir BE IN MINE HANDS, VILLAIN --

-- NO AMOUNT OF ELECTRICAL ENERGY CAN HARM ME.

ZZAKKT

THOU DOST BUT BATHE ME IN THAT WHICH LEAVES ME MOST REFRESHED!



AND NOW--!

AND NOW, TO COMPLETE THE THUNDER GOD'S INTERRUPTED SENTENCE, ASGARDIAN AND FORMER ETERNAL MEET HEAD-ON...

...SINEW AGAINST SINEW, FORCE AGAINST SHEER, NAKED FORCE...

... AND EVEN THE CELESTIALS MOTHERSHIP TREMBLES WITH THE AWESOME POWER OF THAT PRIMORDIAL CLASH!



WHILE IN DISTANT  
**ASGARD:**



LIKEST THOU  
THE SCENE I  
HAVE SHOWN TO  
THEE, LORD ODIN...

...THAT LIVING PORTRAIT OF  
THINE ONLY **BLOODSON**, FIGHTING  
FOR HIS VERY LIFE 'GAINST THE  
MINION OF THE **CELESTIALS**?

THOU  
KNOWEST  
WELL HOW IT  
DID REND MINE  
HEART, SPITE-  
FUL MIMIR.

FOR,  
THOUGH  
THOR BE  
BANISHED FROM  
ASGARD FOR  
GOOD REASONS,  
STILL HIS PAIN  
BE TRULY  
MY PAIN.

WHY DIDST  
THOU NOT TELL  
THE THUNDER  
GOD THOSE  
REASONS,  
PRAY?



THOU DOST TAUNT ME, O FIERY  
AND HATED WELL OF WISDOM...  
FOR THOU KNOWEST I **CANNOT**

TRULY THE  
SINS OF MINE  
OWN RELATIVE  
**YOUTH** DO RE-  
TURN TO PLAGUE  
ME NOW, AFTER  
SO LONG A  
TIME.

IF SO,  
THEY BE  
NOT **ALL** THAT  
HAVE RETURNED  
FOR THAT  
PURPOSE!

EH?



**KARNILLA**, THOU QUEEN  
OF THE NORNS!

THOU HAST  
RETURNED,  
THEN, FROM  
SPINNING  
THY **WEBS**  
OF FATE?



AYE, RETURNED  
IN **SORROW**  
AND IN HOLY  
**ANGER**...

FOR 'WORD HATH REACHED ME THAT  
**THOU**, MOST LOATHSOME OF MEN  
AND GODS, HAST DONE THE ONE  
DEED THAT MIGHT BRING THEE INTO  
IRRECONCILABLE **CONFLICT** WITH  
**KARNILLA**!

THOU  
KNOWEST  
FULL WELL  
WHAT I  
MEAN!



THINE  
HARSH  
WORDS DO  
**GRIEVE** ME  
AS MUCH AS  
REMINDE ME,  
NORN-QUEEN...

YET THOUGH I DID TRULY  
ALLOW THY BELOVED  
**BALDER THE BRAVE** TO  
BE SACRIFICED THAT I  
MIGHT STAVE OFF  
THE **TRUE**  
**RAGNAROK**...

...KNOW  
THEE THAT,  
THOU DOST  
LOVE HIM NO  
MORE THAN  
I!

**BASE  
LIAR!**











--NOT WHEN THE ALL-FATHER HATH GIVEN ME SOME SLIGHT FRAGMENT OF HIS OWN DIVINE ODINFORCE.

HE BADE ME *SAVE* IT FOR JUST SUCH A MOMENT AS THIS, AND THEN TO DIRECT IT THROUGH MY *SWORD*--



--THUS!

ZAP!  
ARRRRH



SKOLL SHALL SLEEP LONG-- AND I HOPE THAT HE HATH NOT DAMAGED THAT WHICH I DO SEEK IN YONDER CAVE.

HAH! MY WORDS DO *MOCK* ME, EVEN AS I UTTER THEM.



FOR THAT WHICH I DID SEARCH FOR, BY MILORD ODIN'S COMMAND, IS THAT WHICH *DESTROYETH ALL*--



--YET ITSELF MAY NEVER BE DESTROYED!

I...THINK THOU HAST SEEN *SMOKE*; KARNILLA...



...KNOW TO SHOW THEE I WOULD SACRIFICE *ALL*, E'EN MINE OWN SON OR THE BELOVED DAUGHTER OF HEIMDALL, FOR THE SAKE OF THE *GLEAMING REALM*.

I NOTICE *THOU* STAYEST SAFE AT HOME, MILORD.

WORD ALSO REACHED ME, THROUGH THE ETHER, OF THOSE COMRADES CALLED THE *WARRIORS THREE*.

THOU DOST KNOW *MUCH*, NORN-QUEEN.

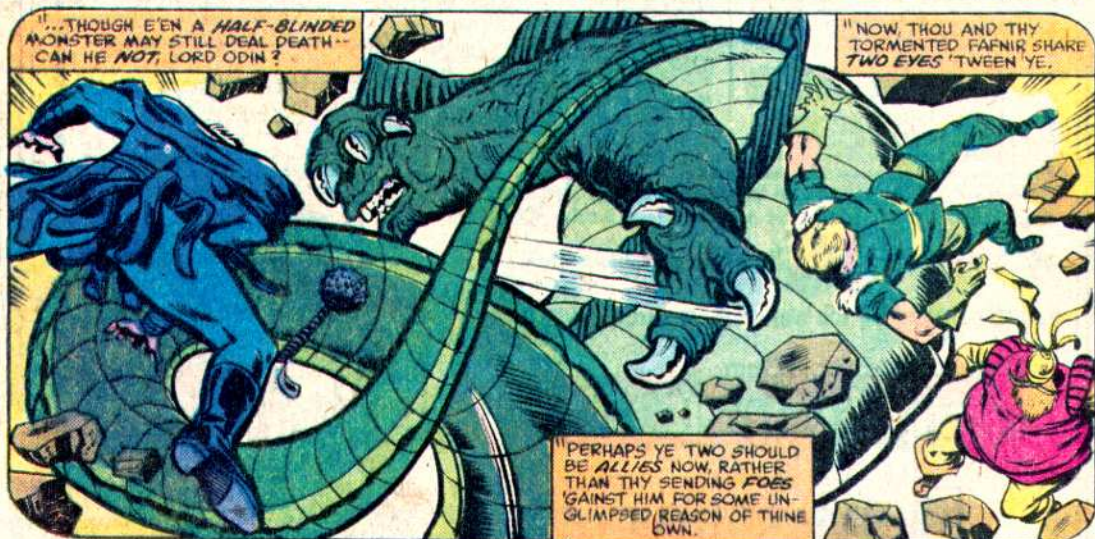
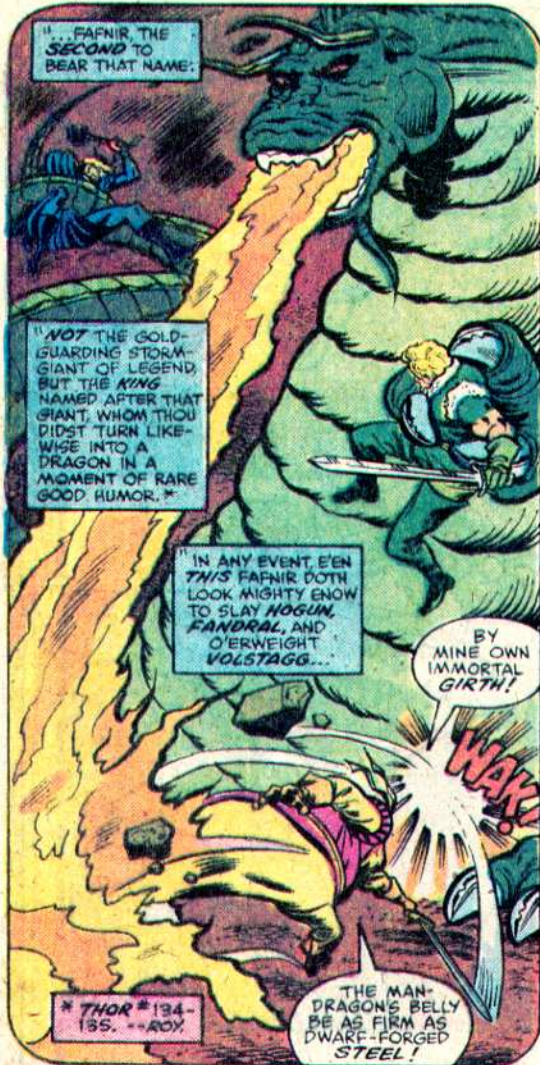


AYE, I HAVE SENT *THEM*, LIKEWISE, TO A DESOLATE AND DANGER-FILLED LAND... ON A MISSION AT WHICH E'EN THOU CANST ONLY GUESS.

AH! 'TIS *FAVOR*, IS'T NOT...

BUT THEY, IT SEEMS, FARE *LESS* WELL THAN THOR'S ONCE-BETROTHED.









"OR, PERHAPS IT BE ALREADY TOO LATE FOR THAT!

FANDRAL! THY SCHEME-- HATH BACKFIRED.

AYE, W-WE BE WEAPON-LESS NOW.

FORGIVE ME, MY FRIENDS-- WHEN WE DO MEET AGAIN-- IN VALHALLA.



FOR THE BODY OF AN ASGARDIAN TO BE TRANSMIGRATED TO VALHALLA, FOOLS, THERE MUST BE A BODY.

OF YOURS, NAUGHT SHALL REMAIN, FOR ODIN OR FOR HELA--



--WHEN THE FIERY BREATH OF FAFNIR HATH REDUCED YE ALL TO FORMLESS, SCATTERED ASHES!

"CRIMSON FLAMES FILL THY OMNISCREEN NOW, MILORD ODIN...



...OBSCURING THE FORMS OF THY DOOMED WARRIORS THREE.

SHALL I TUNE IT MORE FINELY, THAT THOU MAYEST BEHOLD THEIR END?

NAY! LET THE IMAGE FADE!

THOU ART CRUEL BEYOND ALL MEASURE, WOMAN.

THINKEST THOU I DID DESIRE THAT THEY OR THE LADY SIF OR THY BE-LOVED BALDER SHOULD PERISH?



THINE ACTS DO DROWN THY SIMPERING WORDS, ACCURSED OF ASGARD.

NOW, WILT THOU RESTORE BALDER TO LIFE AND TO ME?

I... CANNOT, NORN-QUEEN, MUCH AS I WOULD WISH TO.

ON HIS UNFEELING SHOULDERS DOTH THE FATE OF ASGARD HINGE... AYE, AND MORE.



ENOUGH WEASLING WORDS! I'LL HAVE BALDER LIVING, OR I'LL HAVE REVENGE.

MUST I RAISE MANGOG OR THE HOUNDING HORDES OF HELA TO MAKE THEE DO MY BIDDING?

BY THE FIRES OF MUSPELLSHEIM DO I SWEAR THAT--





BEWARE, NORN! THOUGH THOU MAYEST INDEED SPIN THE FATES OF MEN AND IMMORTALS ON THINE INFERNAL LOOM, SEEK NOT TO THREATEN THE LORD OF ASGARD!

GO ON, LORD ODIN--SMITE HER! DESTROY HER, IF THOU CANST!

LET ALL THE COSMOS SEE HOW BRAVE THOU ART TO ANNIHILATE A GODDESS AS OLD E'EN AS THYSELF!

AYE, DESTROY ME IF THOU ART ABLE--OR ELSE I'LL FIGHT THEE TILL BOTH THINE EYES BE GONE!

NAY, I'LL NOT FIGHT THEE, KARNILLA... NOT NOW...



FOR, THERE BE NO PROFIT IN IT, AND I HAVE BUSINESS ELSEWHERE, ELSEWHEN.

FARE YE WELL, BOTH MY WELL-WISHERS!



BY THE GUNNINGA-GAP, FROM WHICH ALL THINGS DID SPRING!

HE IS GONE, THE BASE COWARD!

BE NOT DECEIVED BY THINE OWN HATRED, DEAR KARNILLA...



ODIN BE MANY THINGS, MORE E'EN THAN THOU CANST KNOW... BUT HE BE NO COWARD.

IF THOU DOST KNOW SO MUCH, MIAMIR, THEN TELL ME WHAT DIRE SECRET HE HINTED AT SO DARKLY.

AH, IF I SHOULD TELL THEE, NORN-QUEEN, THEN 'TWOULD BUT THAT MUCH DIMINISH THE PLEASURE I SHALL TAKE IN SEEING HIM FAIL.

THOU ART SURE, THEN, HE WILL FAIL?



DOST THOU ASK THAT OF MIAMIR, TO WHOM THE FUTURE BE AS AN OPEN SCROLL?

THEN I SHALL TAKE NO OTHER ACTION, FOR THE MOMENT.

PERHAPS WHEN ODIN BE SUFFICIENTLY HUMBLED, THEN BALDER CAN BE RESTORED TO FULL LIFE... AT KARNILLA'S SIDE.



WHILE, BACK IN OUTER SPACE IN THIS DIMENSION--

WILT THOU NOW SURRENDER, ETERNAL?

ETERNAL NO LONGER, AS I HAVE TOLD YOU BEFORE!

I AM HERO NOW, DO YOU HEAR ME?

HERO-- UNDYING ESSENCE OF ALL HEROES!

UNNNH-!

SLAMM!

I TRIED TO SPARE YOU, ASGARDIAN, BUT YOU WOULDN'T LET ME.

NOW, SINCE I REALIZE YOU ARE AT LEAST MY EQUAL IN POWER--

-- I DARE GIVE YOU NO MORE CHANCES!

RRIP

ONCE I DID HOLD THE VERY EARTH THIS ALOFT, AND MEN THOUGHT ME ATLAS, ONE OF THE PRIMORDIAL TITANS.

THIS DAY, I SHALL PROVE THAT PERHAPS THEY WERE RIGHT, AFTER ALL!

BLOPP!

NO MIGHTIER FOE HAVE I FOUGHT, FORGOTTEN ONE-- WHETHER ABOVE, ON, OR UNDER THE EARTH--





-- BUT STILL AM I THOR!

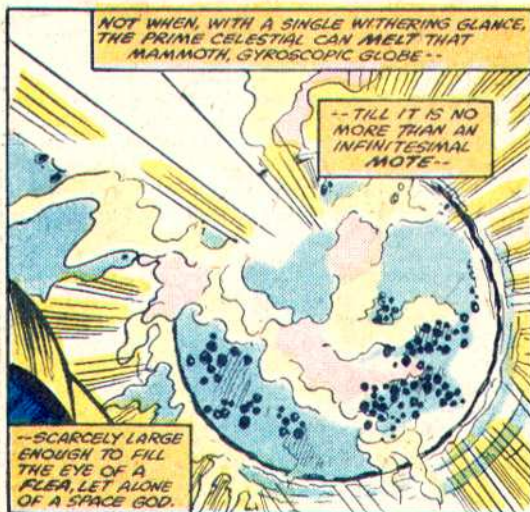
THOR!!

AND WHAT THOU CANST SEND HURLING AT ME--



-- I, IN TURN, MAY HURL AGAINST THE ALLEGED ONE ABOVE ALL!

CAN YOU, OUTCAST SON OF ODIN?



NOT WHEN, WITH A SINGLE WITHERING GLANCE, THE PRIME CELESTIAL CAN MELT THAT MAMMOTH, GYROSCOPIC GLOBE--

-- TILL IT IS NO MORE THAN AN INFINITESIMAL MOTE--

-- SCARCELY LARGE ENOUGH TO FILL THE EYE OF A FLEA, LET ALONE OF A SPACE GOD.



NOR HAS THE FORGOTTEN ONE'S AWE OF YOUR FEAT WEAKENED HIS SINEWS...

YOUR STRENGTH SEEMS MOSTLY IN YOUR HAMMER, THUNDERER...



... EVEN AS MINE WAS RUMORED ONCE TO BE ALL IN MY LONG FLOWING TRESSES.

FROK!



THE FORMER LEGEND, AT LEAST, WAS TRUE! EVEN MY STRENGTH-- CANNOT LIFT-- THE HAMMER!

BUT, PERHAPS IF I CAN KEEP YOU FROM WIELDING IT, THAT WILL--

'TIS NOT THY DESTINY TO KNOW THE TRUTH OF THAT, 'HERO'--





— NOT WHILST THOU HATH STILL TWO FISTS TO STRIKE HOME FOR HIM, HAMMER OR NO!

MUST HURRY-- ERE MY BRAVADO DOTH TURN TO WORMWOOD IN MY MOUTH.

IF I BE BEREFT OF MINE HAMMER FOR SIXTY SECONDS ON THE MIDGARD-PLANE-- I REVERT TO THE LAME DR. DONALD BLAKE--

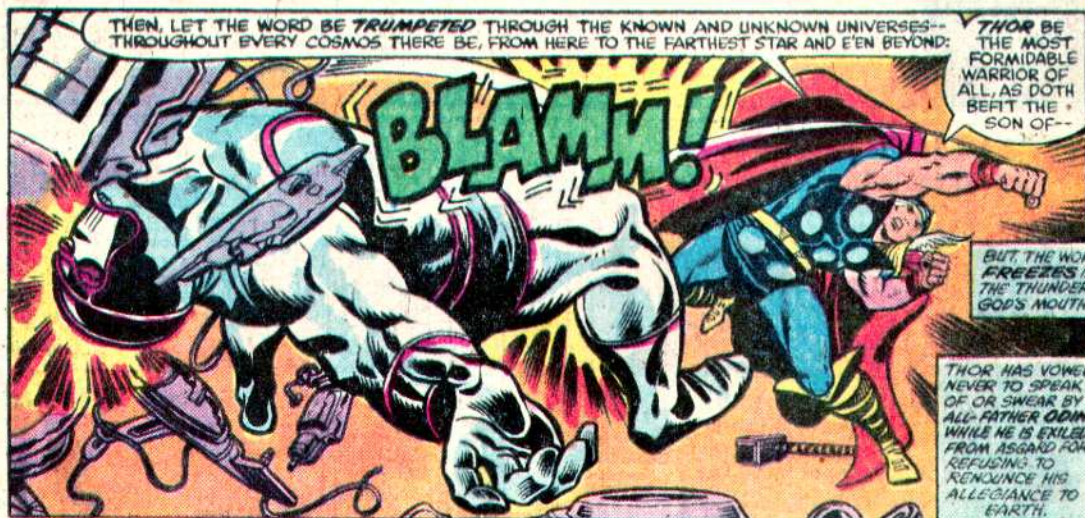
MIDGARD = EARTH. -- REPETITIOUS ROY.



AND HE COULD NOT STAND FOR A SINGLE INSTANT 'GAINST THIS SCION OF OLYMPIA!

UNNGN  
SOKKI!

AH! AT LAST THOU DOTST REEL, ETERNAL.



THEN, LET THE WORD BE TRUMPETED THROUGH THE KNOWN AND UNKNOWN UNIVERSES-- THROUGHOUT EVERY COSMOS THERE BE, FROM HERE TO THE FARTHEST STAR AND E'EN BEYOND:

BLAMM!

THOR BE THE MOST FORMIDABLE WARRIOR OF ALL, AS DOTH BEFIT THE SON OF--

BUT THE WORD FREEZES IN THE THUNDER GOD'S MOUTH.

THOR HAS VOWED NEVER TO SPEAK OF OR SWEAR BY ALL-FATHER ODIN WHILE HE IS EXILED FROM ASGARD FOR REFUSING TO RENOUNCE HIS ALLEGIANCE TO EARTH.



STILL, THE BREATHING BUT OTHERWISE MOTIONLESS FORM OF THE FORGOTTEN ONE SPEAKS WORLDS.

ONE ABOVE ALL, IF THAT BE THE NAME THOU DOTST ANSWER TO--

'T WAS THY FIGHT YON VALIANT ETERNAL DID FIGHT, NOT HIS OWN.



NOW SPEAK IF SPEAK THOU CANST-- AND TELL ME HOW I MAY HALT THY STAR-SPAWNED RACE'S FIFTY-YEAR JUDGMENT OF MIDGARD!

SPEAK OR FACE THE POWER OF THOR-- THE MIGHT OF MJOLNIR!

SPEAK!



AS, BACK IN OLYMPIA:

OUR FELLOW ETERNALS GROW RESTLESS, FATHER.

I TELL YOU, WE CAN DELAY NO LONGER. WE MUST ACT! WE MUST STRIKE!

STRONG WORDS, THENA, MY DAUGHTER. AND WHAT SAY YOU, IKARIS?

WE GAVE OUR WORD TO THE ASGARDIAN, ZURAS.

IS THE OATH OF THE MASTER OF OLYMPIA WRITTEN ON THE BREEZES THAT BLOW?

WE VOWED ONLY TO DELAY ACTION... THAT IS ALL.

TRUE, FATHER! AND EVERY MOMENT WE DELAY WE'VE LESS HOPE OF PROTECTING OURSELVES FROM--

FROM WHAT, THENA?

IF YOU ARE PRIVY TO THE SECRET AIMS OF THE CELESTIALS--

HEAR ME, THEN! I RULE THAT WE HAVE FULFILLED OUR VOW TO THOR, GOD OF THUNDER.

WE ARE FREE NOW TO ACT ON OUR OWN AS IS FITTING FOR ETERNALS BORN.

AND WHAT ACTION IS THAT TO BE, FATHER?

--PLEASE TELL US, SO THAT WE MAY SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE.

ONCE BEFORE, MY CHILDREN, WE *PROBED* THE SPACE GODS' CRAFT IN OUR *ORGANIC FORM*-- BUT TOOK NO HOSTILE ACTION.

THIS TIME, WE SHALL USE ALL THAT POWER, IF NEED BE, TO LASH OUT.

AS FOR ME, I SHALL ABIDE BY THE DECISION OF ZURAS WHATEVER IT MAY BE.

PREPARE FOR THE RITUAL OF THE *UNI-MIND!*





AND EVEN AS ZURAS MAKES THAT STARTLING PRONOUNCEMENT--

SO, THOU WILT NOT DEIGN TO SPEAK TO ME OF THINE OWN ACCORD...

... BUT WISH ONLY TO SCOOP ME UP AS I BEHELD THY FELLOW DO UNTO AN AIRLINER.

WELL, SPACE GOD THOUGH THOU BE, THOU HAST MUCH TO LEARN--



**KRAK!**

--ABOUT THE GOD OF THUNDER!



YET, ERE WE DO BATTLE-- IF BATTLE WE MUST-- I WOULD BEHOLD THE FACE OF HIM WHO OPPOSES ME.

AND LIGHTNING HATH OTHER REACHES THAN MERE DESTRUCTION.

IT MAY ALSO BE USED TO ILLUMINATE THE DARK PLACES-- **THUS!**



BUT, AS THE HAMMER-DIRECTED BEAM STRIKES THE GRIM BLACKNESS WHICH ENSHIROUDS THE TOWERING FIGURE...

BY IDUNN'S GOLDEN APPLES! THE SHADOWS DO SWALLOW THE LIGHT, LIKE UNTO A BLACK HOLE!

THESE CELESTIALS DO BEND E'EN TIME AND SPACE TO THEIR WHIMS, IT SEEMS.



NOR IS BASE MATTER  
EXEMPTED FROM THEIR  
AWESOME POWER--



--AS THE SON OF  
ODIN LEARNS, A  
MOMENT LATER--

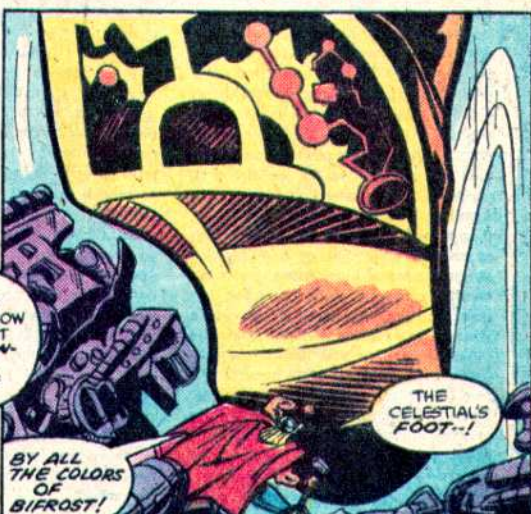
--WHEN UN-  
NUMBERED TONS OF  
DELICATE YET  
MASSIVE  
APPARATUS  
COMES HUR-  
TLING DOWN  
UPON HIS COS-  
TUMED FORM!



THOU ART NOT  
ABOVE THE  
PHYSICAL,  
THEN--

--OR EVEN,  
PERHAPS, LOSING  
THY TEMPER--  
AND SMASHING  
INSTRUMENTS  
OF USE TO  
THEE.

STILL,  
I'VE NO  
DESIRE NOW  
FOR AIGHT  
BUT KNOW-  
LEDGE! TELL  
ME OF--



THE  
CELESTIAL'S  
FOOT--!

BY ALL  
THE COLORS  
OF  
BIFROST!



FROM SUCH STRIDES,  
MAYHAP SOME OF  
THE TALES OF SEVEN-  
LEAGUE BOOTS  
WERE BORN.

YET THOR  
HIMSELF HATH  
GIVEN BIRTH TO  
LEGENDS, IN  
HIS DAY--

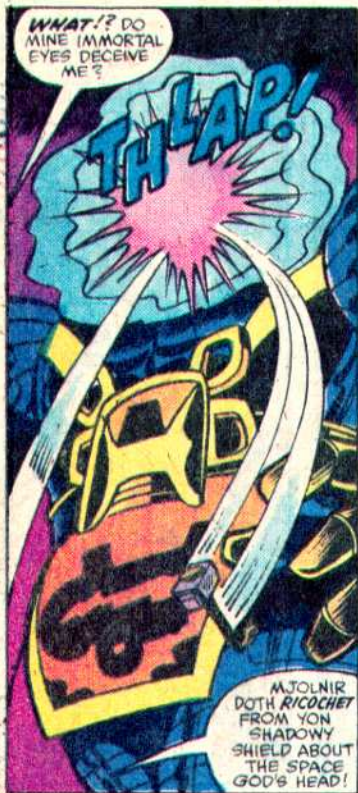
WHOMP!



--AND I  
HAVE BEEN  
MOCKED  
LONG ENOW!

ON THY  
GUARD,  
MONSTER  
FROM THE  
OUTER  
DARK!









YET, WHILST EARTH STANDS THREATENED BY THINE ILK, I'LL NOT FALL-- UNLESS IT BE IN DEATH!

NAY, NOT IF ASGARD ITSELF WERE ARRAYED AGAINST ME WOULD I ABANDON MINE ADOPTED WORLD TO--

THE NEXT SECOND THE THUNDER GOD IS STRUCK SUDDENLY SILENT--

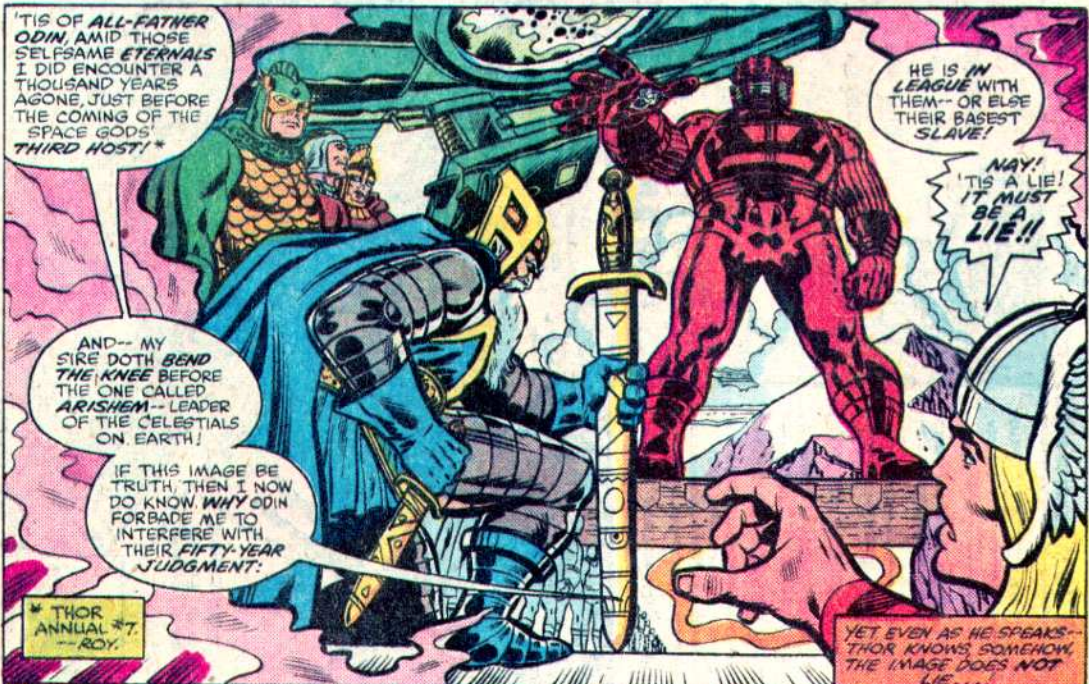


-- AS THE ONE ABOVE ALL STRETCHES OUT A GIGANTIC, SLOWING HAND:

EH? BE THIS SOME NEW ATTACK-- SOME ADDED TRICKERY?

NAY! HOLD! HIS STRANGE PALM DOTH CAUSE AN IMAGE TO BEGIN TO FORM IN THE AIR BEFORE ME--

-- AN IMAGE MOST FOUL!



'TIS OF ALL-FATHER ODIN, AMID THOSE SELF-SAME ETERNALS I DID ENCOUNTER A THOUSAND YEARS AGONE, JUST BEFORE THE COMING OF THE SPACE GODS' THIRD HOST!\*

HE IS IN LEAGUE WITH THEM-- OR ELSE THEIR BASEST SLAVE!

NAY! 'TIS A LIE! IT MUST BE A LIE!!

AND-- MY SIRE DOTH BEND THE KNEE BEFORE THE ONE CALLED ARISHEM-- LEADER OF THE CELESTIALS ON EARTH!

IF THIS IMAGE BE TRUTH, THEN I NOW DO KNOW WHY ODIN FORBADE ME TO INTERFERE WITH THEIR FIFTY-YEAR JUDGMENT.

\* THOR ANNUAL #7 -- ROY.

YET EVEN AS HE SPEAKS-- THOR KNOWS, SOMEHOW, THE IMAGE DOES NOT LIE...

# NEXT LOOK HOMEWARD, ASGARDIAN!





Dear Roy,

I really do wish one could go back and erase mistakes made in one's life and start over again. It would make all of life's problems, big and small, quite solvable, wouldn't it? Well, we both know that's not possible, and since I consider the entire Celestial storyline a mistake, it makes it all the more unfortunate.

I address this to THOR because it is here that the powers-that-be decided to dump Kirby's brainchild. Mind you, I love the artwork, and the scripting is as good as I've come to expect when I read a Roy Thomas mag; THOR has never been better, in those respects. But the Celestials are going to make it all worthless, and perhaps everything Marvel has produced worthless as well. Marvel's strongest point has always been (as you, perhaps better than anyone, should realize) its continuity. Writers and artists might come and go, but the Marvel Universe remains basically the same. In recent years, you guys have even made a better-than-average attempt at tying together the histories of characters dating back to the Golden Age, as in the case of Captain America and the Invaders. But all of this is for naught in light of the massive changes that not only one, or two characters, but an entire universe, must undergo with the advent of the Celestials. There is simply no way to convince me that they, or any of the other characters in the ETERNALS title, could have coexisted with the rest of Marvel humanity, on this very planet, without our having come into contact with them before.

And that, for me, ruins just about everything.

Look, I know it's not your fault. It isn't even Jack Kirby's fault, although *somebody* should have known better. The Eternals and their reality were a great concept, as almost everything of Jack's is, but they just couldn't meld with the Marvel Universe as we know it and not shatter everything to the foundations. It makes me very sorry. A bit of the Marvel magic has died.

Jonathan Hochberg  
460 Riverside Dr.  
New York, NY 10027

If a "bit of the Marvel magic" has indeed died, Jonathan, then we hope you won't resent it if we tell you that we think it's *your* attitude, not ours, which has killed it—if indeed it's dead at all, which we'd like to doubt. You have a strong point, of course, so Roy'd like to answer you thusly. And we quote:

"I could not agree more with Jonathan Hochberg—if the basic assumptions underlying his understanding of what I intend to do with the Thor/Eternals/Celestials storyline were not almost totally *wrong!* As it is, I must disagree with him almost completely.

"His mistake is a common one among those few detractors of the current plotline: He thinks it impossible for the Eternals and Celestials to be in any way reconciled with the Marvel Universe without hurting the latter. To me, this is similar to earlier statements by scientists that man would never be able to survive speeds greater than 35 m.p.h., let alone go to the moon.

"It's for that reason, I suspect, that when I suggested to Jim Shooter that I be allowed to be the one to bring the Eternals and Company into the good ol' M.U., he enthusiastically concurred. After all, I myself had been, in private if not in letters pages, a leading critic of certain elements of Kirby's ETERNALS book. I did not think that any non-licensed color comic should exist which could not be reconciled in some way with the Marvel Universe. I still don't, any more than I did the day I decreed that Spider-Man and Dracula should co-star, but never meet, in the pages of MARVEL TEAM-UP.

"Thus, as you can see, no 'powers-that-be' decided to 'dump' the Eternals in THOR. It was I who requested permission to use them more or less exclusively for the next year or so—that's the only way I'd touch the whole project—even though the

idea of *how* to reconcile Olympia and Olympus, etc., was just beginning to congeal in my mind. Each day, each week, each issue plotted for THOR, the total concept becomes clearer (though certain aspects of its conclusion, which I won't reveal now, have always been in view, or I'd not have begun).

"Jack Kirby's ETERNALS, for me, are one of the great creations of the 1970's in comicbooks—and I say this as one who was barely familiar with them while the mag was still being published. No, I didn't like the writing—and I still grit my teeth when I see how an attempt was made therein, albeit not maliciously on Jack's part, to undercut the entire validity of the rest of the Marvel Universe—Thor, Zeus' Olympians, almost *everything*, from the origins of the human race on up.

"Then, it came to me that a *synthesis could* be attained, and that it would be best reached in the pages of THOR, the first and always major comicbook from 1962 on to deal with gods on earth.

"Your error, Jonathan, to repeat, is in judging that there is 'no way' the characters in the ETERNALS title can be brought into the Marvel Universe without hurting the latter. This may or may not be true—but no one will be in a position to say so until the current storyline finishes, many moons from now. Till then, your statement is, alas, equivalent to someone reading a locked-room murder mystery and saying, 'There's no way this murder could have happened.' It's good if the writer (and in comics, the artists) can set up a situation where the reader thinks this; but if he has any faith in or respect for the author, the reader will at least suspend real judgment till the *end* of the story. After all, who'd be interested in coming to grips with a mystery if all the loose ends were wrapped up at the *beginning*, not at the end?

"To sum up and elaborate, finally: It's quite possible that, in a limited way, it was a mistake to let Jack Kirby create some of his alternate universes the way he did in THE ETERNALS and elsewhere. But I think it would be a far greater mistake to let the characters languish forever on the outer fringes of the Marvel Universe, the more so because sooner or later some less-consistency-minded soul would be bound to bring in Ikaris or Sersi or *someone* from Kirby's cast, if only to round out a team-up type book or an annual. *This* would be, to my mind, doing the *real* violence to the Marvel Universe.

"When the current THOR series is over, I give you my personal word that, whether you *like* the end result or not, the Marvel Universe will still be intact, the Eternals and Crew will stand as a certain distinct but not overriding part of it, and you'll have learned more about Thor, Odin, and Asgard—not to mention earth—in the process.

"In the meantime, by all means, criticize—suggest—involve yourself. I love reader feedback, whether I agree with it or not; and I'm not fool enough to ignore it. But gimme a break, huh? Let me *finish* the fershlugginer story before you decide positively that it's wrongheaded... and give me and my fellow Marvel editors (Jim, Mark, Ralph, *et al.*) credit for trying to *improve* the Marvel Universe, not *destroy* it.

"End of plea. See you in a year or so..."

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