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THE MIGHTY THOR™



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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!**

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ON A WORLD THAT IS NOT HIS OWN, A THUNDER GOD RAGES— AND THE SPACE BETWEEN THE WORLDS REVERBERATES WITH THE RESOUNDING BANG OF HIS RIGHTEOUS WRATH—!

Continuing
**THE SOUL-SHATTERING
CELESTIALS
SAGA!**

HEAR ME, EYE OF ODIN!

BECAUSE I DID DEFEAT THEE IN COMBAT, THOU HAST SWORN TO TELL ME THAT WHICH I WOULD KNOW.*

KEEP NOW THINE AVOWED WORD— OR BY ASGARD I SHALL MAKE THEE WISH TO GODS UNBORN THAT THOU HADST!

**FROM
VALHALLA
—A
VALKYRIE!**

*AS SEEN IN
ISSUES #292-
295. --A, 7.

WELL, ORB? WILT THOU
FULFILL THINE OATH,
OR MUST ENCHANTED
MJOENIR SMITE
THEE ANEW?

YOU ARE MUCH
GIVEN TO THREATS,
ODINSON, BUT
EYE AM NOT
IMPRESSED.

HAVE YOU
LEARNED NOTHING
FROM WHAT EYE
HAVE REVEALED
TO YOU SO FAR?



AYE! I HAVE SEEN
THAT THERE WAS
ANOTHER RAGNAROK--
A TWILIGHT OF GODS--
NOW TWO MILLENNIA
DEAD--

--IN WHICH AN
ELDER ASGARD
PERISHED, OF
WHICH I KNEW
NAUGHT.



VERY
GOOD!
WHAT
ELSE?

TAUNT ME NOT, EYE!
I LEARNED ALSO
THAT, FROM THE
ASHES OF THAT
ELDER ASGARD, THE
NEW ONE ROSE LIKE
A FIRE-BORN
PHOENIX.



THOU DIDST SHOW ME THE AWESOME BIRTH OF ODIN--
E'EN MINE OWN BIRTHING,
THOUGH SHADOWED
IN DARKNESS.

I DID SEE THE
THEFT OF THE
FABLED RHINEGOLD
BY THE VILE GNOME
ALBERICH--

--AND HOW
THE ALL-
FATHER DID
STEAL IT IN
TURN, ONLY TO
GIVE IT O'ER TO
THE STORM GIANT
FAFNIR.



HOW ELSE COULD
HE HAVE FREED
THE GODDESS
YODUN, WHOSE
GOLDEN APPLES
KEEP THE GODS
YOUNG?

BUT NOW,
BEHOLD MORE
IN TRY MIND'S
BRIGHT EYE--!

I DO SO! BUT
THIS TIME, I'D
BEST LEARN
WHAT I WILL!

AH! ETERNAL ASGARD
OPENS TO MY GAZE
ONCE MORE, IN A
DAY LONG GONE...!



YES, BUT NOW,
THOR, LOOK BEYOND
ASGARD-- AND SEE
THAT YOUR FATHER
ODIN STANDS TODAY
NOT THERE, BUT IN
ANOTHER PLACE OF
HIGH-EQUAL
SPLENDOR.

VALHALLA,
THAT MASSIVE
EDIFICE WHICH
THE STORM-GIANTS
FAFNIR AND
FASOLT DID
CONSTRUCT
FOR HIM!

AND HEAR HIM MUSE
TO HIMSELF IN THESE
EARLIER DAYS, WHEN HE,
NOT THE GODDESS MELA,
PRESIDED OVER THAT
PLACE WHOSE NAME
MEANS HALL OF HEROES...

BY THE SACRED
SPEAR! I WOULD
SEEM I NOW HAVE
ALL THAT EITHER
MAN OR BATTLE-
GOD COULD
DESIRE.

AND YET, MY
GLORY BE NOT
COMPLETE--
INDEED THEY
RING HOLLOW
ALL ABOUT ME.

COULD IT BE BECAUSE
OF THE CURSE OF ALBERICH,
WHICH THE LOATHSOME
GNOME DID LAY UPON ME?



AYE, 'TIS MOST SURELY THE REASON.

YET, WHAT CHOICE HAD I-- FOR ELSE, MINE ASGARDIAN HOSTS WOULD HAVE PERISHED, FOR LACK OF IDUNN'S FRUIT?

WELL, TIME ENOW LATER TO WORRY ABOUT ALBERICH'S CURSE...

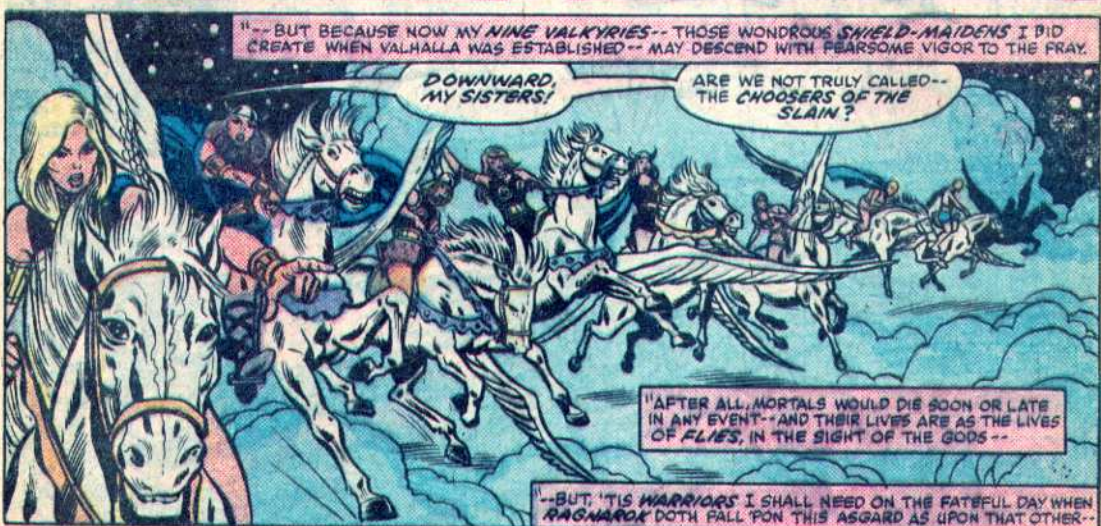
FOR NOW, I MUST SPY ON DISTANT MIDGARD.*

*MIDGARD = EARTH. A.S.Y.



AH, THERE BE A BATTLE MOST FIERCE IN PROGRESS THERE, VIKING AGAINST VIKING-- ALL OF THEM MY WORSHIPPERS!

'TIS A SIGHT TO GLADDEN MINE HEART-- NOT BECAUSE POOR MORTALS MUST DIE THIS DAY--



-- BUT BECAUSE NOW MY NINE VALKYRIES-- THOSE WONDROUS SHIELD-MAIDENS I DID CREATE WHEN VALHALLA WAS ESTABLISHED-- MAY DESCEND WITH FEARSOME VIGOR TO THE FRAY.

DOWNWARD, MY SISTERS!

ARE WE NOT TRULY CALLED-- THE CHOOSERS OF THE SLAIN?

"AFTER ALL, MORTALS WOULD DIE SOON OR LATE IN ANY EVENT-- AND THEIR LIVES ARE AS THE LIVES OF FLIES, IN THE SIGHT OF THE GODS --

-- BUT, 'TIS WARRIORS I SHALL NEED ON THE FATEFUL DAY WHEN RAGNAROK DOETH FALL 'PON THIS ASGARD AS UPON THAT OTHER--



"AND WHAT MIGHTIER WARRIORS CAN THERE BE, THAN THE MERCILESS WARRIORS I DID SELECT TO BE MY WORSHIPPERS ?

"TOO LONG HAVE VALHALLA'S RAMPARTS STOOD EMPTY OF LIFE.

"ITS NAME DOETH MEAN HALL OF HEROES!"-- AND 'TIS TIME IT DID EARN ITS NAME!"



SO SPEAKS LORD ODIN, AS HIS VALKYRIES GO ABOUT THEIR APPOINTED TASK.

BUT, EYE KNOW FULL WELL THIS IS OLD NEWS TO YOU, THUNDERER.

WELL, THIS NEXT SCENE SHALL BE MOST STRANGE TO YOU-- EVEN THOUGH THE FACE AND FORM EYE SHALL SHOW YOU SHALL BE MOST FAMILIAR INDEED!

SHOW ON, THEN!



BENOLD NOW, THUNDER GOD A MAN STRIDING AMID A RAGING STORM SUCH AS YOU YOURSELF MIGHT HAVE WILLED, A THOUSAND YEARS AGO.

SEE NOW HE STRUGGLES AGAINST THE SITING WIND, WRAPPING HIS SCARLET CLOAK ABOUT HIM--



--TILL HE SEES--

A DWELLING, HERE AMID THE HOWLING WILDERNESS! PRAISE BE TO ALL THE GODS IN ASGARD!

YET, WHAT MANNER OF HOUSE IS THIS WHERE A GREAT TREE SEEMS TO GROW FROM ITS VERY CENTER-- AS IF IT WERE YGGDRASIL, THE TREE OF LIFE, ITSELF!

STILL, THAT IS OF LITTLE CONCERN-- TO ONE PURSUED.



NO MATTER WHOSE WARM HEARTH THIS MAY BE--

--HERE I MUST REST!



BUT THOUGH HIS WORDS ARE DEFIANT, HIS POWERFUL LEGS NOW GROW FRAIL BENEATH HIS FRAME...

UNNN--!!

--AND HE SINKS, EXHAUSTED, BARELY WITHIN THE DOORWAY.



ONCE AGAIN, EYE, THOU HAST SHOWN ME MYSELF-- YET IN A GARB, AYE, E'EN A LIFE, I DO REMEMBER NOT!

YOU SHALL REMEMBER IT, THOR.

BELIEVE ME WHEN I SAY-- YOU SHALL!



FOR
AT THAT
MOMENT,
FROM AN
INNER
CHAMBER...

WHAT--? A WAYFARER
WITHIN OUR HOUSE?

W-WATER!
A DRINK--!



YES-- FOR I SEE YOUR
LIPS ARE PARCHED.

THE
FALLEN ONE
RECOVERS
QUICKLY...



MY THANKS! BUT, WHO IS
IT RESTORES ME LIFE?

THIS
HOUSE...
AND THIS
WIFE...
BELONG TO
HUNTING.



LET ME TEND TO
YOUR WOUNDS...!

THEY
ARE NOTHING.



I'LL BUT REST A MOMENT,
AND THEN TAKE MY
LEAVE. I--

THAT
SHADOW!
WHO--?

FEAR
NOT--



-- IT IS HUNTING, MY HUSBAND!

AND WHO
IS THIS
YOU MAKE
OVER LIKE
A SIMPER-
ING GIRL?

A WANDERER,
MY LORD -- WHOM
NEED AND THE STORM
DROVE INSIDE.



SHE DID NOTHING
WRONG, GOOD
HUNTING.

ACCEPT
WELCOME AS
MY GUEST,
TRAVELER.

WOMAN,
BRING US
FOOD.



YOU ARE AS FAIR AND BLOND AS MY WIFE, AND
I NOTED NO HORSE TETHERED OUTSIDE.

AS YOUR GRACIOUS WIFE
HAS SAID: FROM
THE STORM.

WHO ARE
YOU AND HOW
CAME YOU
HERE?

THAT'S NO ANSWER!



PERHAPS THERE'S MORE TO THIS THAN YOU'VE TOLD ME, EH, WIFE?

STAY YOUR HAND, HUNDING!

MY LORD-- YOU'RE HURTING ME--!

I THANK YOU FOR YOUR HOSPITALITY-- BUT I'LL NOT HAVE YOUR WIFE INNOCENTLY ACCUSED!



STAY YOUR TEMPER, STRANGER; MY WIFE IS USED TO SUCH CARESSES, AND KNOWS I MEAN HER NO HARM.

STILL, I WOULD LEARN WHO YOU ARE.

SURELY A NAME SEEMS A FAIR EXCHANGE FOR A ROOF OVER YOUR HEAD IN THIS STORM, DOES IT NOT?



YOU MAY CALL ME... "WOLF-KING," FOR I AM A SOVEREIGN OF SORROWS.

MY FATHER WAS WOLF, AND I CAME ONE OF A PAIR... FOR A TWIN SISTER HAD I.



"WE LIVED IN A DEEP WOODS, WHERE MY FATHER RAISED ME TO THE HUNT.

"I KNEW NOT HIS KITH OR KIN, BUT WAS DIMLY AWARE THAT WE HAD... ENEMIES.



"AND ONE DAY, WE RETURNED FROM HUNTING TO FIND OUR HOUSE BURNED-- OUR LAIR LAID WASTE--

"...MY MOTHER SLAIN, AND MY SISTER DOUBTLESS CONSUMED BY THE RAGING FIRE

"IT WAS THE CLAN CALLED THE NEIDINGS WHICH DID THE DEED, MY FATHER SAID...



"... AND THEY'D SOON RETURN TO SLAY US, AS WELL.

"THUS WE FLED, THOUGH WE'D BOTH HAVE PREFERRED TO STAY AND FIGHT.

"ONLY A FOOL LETS HIS FOES CHOOSE TIME AND PLACE.

"IN TIME, WE STOOD TO FACE THEM, THOSE THIEVING, MURDERING NEDINGS--



--AND MANY THE DOGS WHO FELL BEFORE THE WOLVES. THERE IN THE DARK FOREST NIGHT.

"YET WHEN OUR FOES ALL LAY DEAD, OR ELSE HAD SCATTERED TO THE MOONWINDS...MY FATHER HAD VANISHED...



"AND HIS WOLFSKIN CLOAK WAS ALL I EVER FOUND.



"FROM THAT DAY TO THIS, I'VE ROAMED THE WORLD. AN OUTCAST.

"YET, MY SWORD AT LEAST WAS MY FRIEND--UNTIL OF LATE I ANSWERED A WOMAN'S CRY FOR HELP...



"HER LOATHSOME CLAN WERE DRAGGING HER, DESPITE HER STRUGGLES, TO A MARRIAGE SHE DID NOT WANT... AND MY HEART WENT OUT TO HER.



FEAR NOT, DAMSEL! YOU'LL WED NO ONE AGAINST YOUR WILL!

"AND SO, THIRSTING BLADE IN HAND, I WENT TO HER RESCUE.



"ONE AFTER ANOTHER OF THEM FELL BENEATH MY FURY--"



"BUT ALAS, I'D RECKONED WITHOUT THE BOND OF KINSHIP..."

"MURDERER! YOU ARE SLAYING MY BROTHERS!"

"I TRIED TO KEEP BOTH MAIDEN AND CLANSMEN AT BAY-- BUT A STRAY SWORD SWUNG--"



"--AND SHE FELL AMID THEM, SLAIN BY THEIR VENGEFUL HAND."

"MORE KINSMEN CAME, I KNEW... SO I FLED..."

"...AND NOW YOU KNOW WHY I CALL MYSELF WOE-KING."

"ASSASSIN!"



"THEY WERE MY KIN YOU SLEW-- THOUGH I CAME TOO LATE TO JOIN THE EARLIER FRAY."

"NOW I KNOW WHY THE TRACKS OF THE SLAYER LED TO MY OWN HOUSE!"

"WHAT--?"

"I'LL KILL YOU NOW--!"

"THEN I MUST--"

"HUNTING--NO! YOUR OATH OF HOSPITALITY--!"



"YOU SPEAK TRUE, WIFE! OATHS ARE NOT LIGHTLY MADE IN THE NORTHLAND."

"FOR TONIGHT, YOU ARE MY GUEST, WULFSON-- BUT ARM YOURSELF FOR THE MORROW!"

"FOR, WHEN DAYLIGHT COMES, WHETHER YOU HAVE SWORD OR NO--"



"--YOU'LL PAY YOUR DEBT, IN BLOOD!"

"COME, WIFE!"



"AND SO, THE ONE WHO CALLS HIMSELF WOE-KING AWAITS, WITH HEAVY HEART, THE COMING DAWN."

"FOR WHAT WEAPON SHALL HE FIND HERE IN THE HOUSE OF HIS NEWFOUND Foe?"



THEN, DURING THE DEEPEST AND DARKEST PART OF THE NIGHT...

HSST! ARE YOU AWAKE, WAYFARER?

AYE, BUT, YOUR HUSBAND--

--LIES IN HEAVY SLEEP FOR I MINGLED A POTION WITH HIS DRINK.

BUT WHY--?



THAT I MIGHT SHOW YOU-- THIS!

A SWORD I AMBEDDED IN THE TREE! I DID NOT SEE IT BEFORE, THERE IN THE SHADOWS.



A BAND OF HUNDDING'S KINSMEN SAT IN THIS HOUSE, AT THE WEDDING FEAST OF A MOST UNWILLING DAMSEL--



--WHEN A GREY-CLAD STRANGER SUDDENLY APPEARED, HOLDING A GLEAMING SWORD--



-- WHICH HE DROVE DEEP INTO THE ASH, ERE HE WORDLESSLY DEPARTED --



AND WHERE HE HAD DRIVEN IT--

--NO MAN COULD PULL IT OUT AGAIN!



YET, I SENSED IN THE STRANGER'S LOOK AT ME THAT REVENGE FOR MY SORROWS WOULD BE MINE IF THAT SWORD WERE PULLED FROM THE TREE-- FOR, I WAS THE MAIDEN UNWILLINGLY WEDDED THAT NIGHT!

THEN, YOUR REVENGE IS AT HAND!



MY FATHER TOLD ME I'D FIND A SWORD IN MY TIME OF GREAT-EST NEED-- AND THAT TIME IS SURELY NOW.

LET "NEEDFUL" BE THE NAME OF THIS TIMELY BLADE--

--AND LET MY OWN NAME BE NO LONGER WOE-KING--

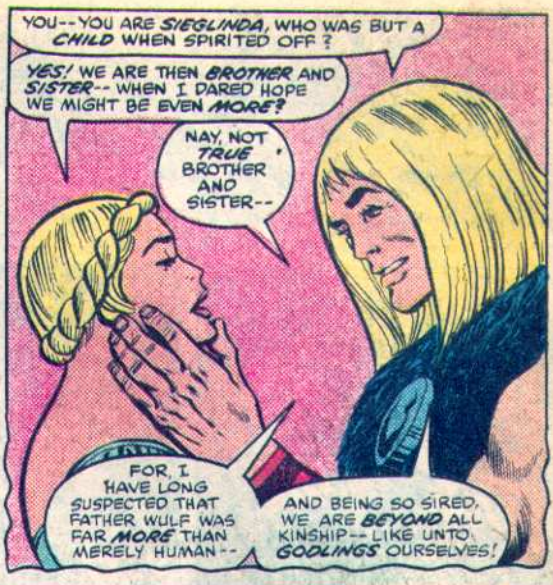


--BUT **SIEGMUND**, SON OF WOLF AND MIGHTIEST WARRIOR OF THE HOUSE OF THE **VOLSUNGS!**

WHAT? ARE YOU TRULY **SIEGMUND** WHO STANDS BESIDE ME?

KNOW THEN THAT I AM **SIEGLINDA**-- YOUR TWIN--

--AND THAT IT WAS FROM **WOLF'S BURNING HOUSE** THAT THE MURDEROUS KIN OF HUNTING CARRIED ME OFF YEARS AGO!



YOU-- YOU ARE **SIEGLINDA**, WHO WAS BUT A CHILD WHEN SPIRITED OFF?

YES! WE ARE THEN **BROTHER AND SISTER**-- WHEN I DARED HOPE WE MIGHT BE EVEN **MORE?**

NAY, NOT **TRUE BROTHER AND SISTER**--

FOR, I HAVE LONG SUSPECTED THAT FATHER WOLF WAS FAR **MORE** THAN MERELY HUMAN--

AND BEING SO SURED, WE ARE **BEYOND** ALL KINSHIP-- LIKE UNTO **GODLINGS** OURSELVES!



SO, **EYE OF ODIN**-- 'T WAS ALL THEN A **PLOT** OF MY FATHERS THOU HAST SHOWN ME.

SMALL WONDER! HE DOTH **PLOT MUCH**, IT SEEMS.

YOU KNOW NOT THE **HALE** OF IT THUNDER GOD...



...THOUGH EVENTS EVEN THEN **TRANSPIRING** IN **ASSGARD** MAY BEGIN TO ENLIGHTEN YOU.

BRUNNHILDA! WHERE-BE MY FAVORITE AMONGST THE WARLIKE **VALKYRIES?**

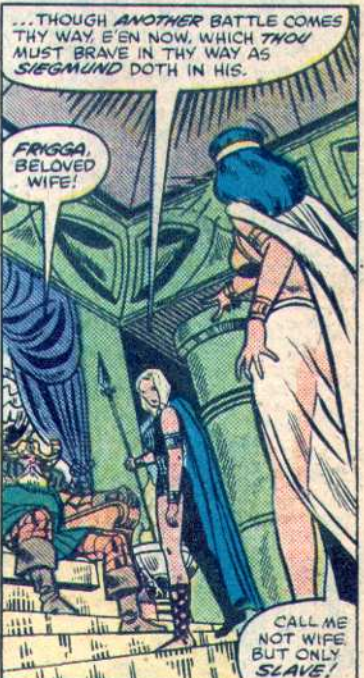
HERE, MILORD.

HIE THEE, THEN, TO THE BATTLE BELOW-- FOR **SIEGMUND**, WHO BE MINE OWN OFFSPRING, MUST **PREVAIL**--



--WHILE HUNTING MAY FIND HIS WAY, ON HIS OWN, TO **HELA'S** DARK REALM, FOR I DO **BANISH** HIM FROM SACRED **VALHALLA**.

AS EVER, I'LL RIDE TO DO THY **BIDDING**, LORD **ODIN**...



...THOUGH **ANOTHER** BATTLE COMES THY WAY, E'EN NOW, WHICH THOU MUST **BRAVE** IN THY WAY AS **SIEGMUND** DOTH IN HIS.

FRIGGA, BELOVED WIFE!

CALL ME NOT WIFE, BUT ONLY **SLAVE!**



WHAT MEANST THOU?

THOU CANST ASK THAT-- WHILE SENDING BRUNNHILDA OUT TO SLAY VALIANT HUNTING?

VALIANT?!



I SEE NO VALOR IN HUNTING, WIFE.

AT LEAST HE DOTH KEEP HIS MARRIAGE VOWS-- AND HE HATH PRAYED UNTO ME FOR REVENGE FOR THE BREAKING OF THEM!

I AM GODDESS OF MARRIAGES, MILORD--



...AND I DEMAND VENGEANCE UPON THE WARRIOR WHO HATH TRANSGRESSED ITS VOWS.

THOUGH HE BE THINE OWN HALF-HUMAN SON-- SIEGMUND MUST DIE!



SUCH VENGEANCE BE TRULY THINE TO DEMAND, FRIGGA-- YET 'TIS NOT IN MINE HEART TO STRIKE DOWN MINE OWN OFFSPRING.

I ASK ONLY THAT THOU DOT SHIELD HIM NOT.

TAKE BACK THE SWORD THOU DIDST FASHION FOR HIM!

I SHALL DO-- AS THOU DOT ASK.

'TIS THY DUE, AS ODIN'S QUEEN.



I LEAVE THEE NOW, MILORD, TO DO AS THOU MUST.

DO AS THOU WILT WITH THE CHANGELING SIEGLINDA-- BUT THY BLOODSON SIEGMUND MUST PERISH THIS NIGHT!

THOU HAST HEARD, VALKYRIE.

GO NOW, AND PERFORM THE DEED.



ALL-FATHER-- DO NOT MAKE ME DO THIS TERRIBLE THING!

SIEGMUND IS THY SON, E'EN BY A HUMAN MOTHER!

NO! I WILL NOT DO IT!



THOU HAST LESS CHOICE IN THE MATTER E'EN THAN I, SPEAR-MAIDEN.

BECAUSE I AM BOUND BY OATH TO DEFEND FRIGGA'S HONOR, THOU ART BOUND-- TO ME.

AYE...!

GO FORTH, THEN...



--AND DEATH, DEATH BE TO SIEGMUND!

SUCH, AND SUCH ALONE BE THE VALKYRIE'S QUEST!



THEN, LORD ODIN MURMURS ON, MORE TO HIMSELF THAN TO ANY OTHER...

'TIS I, AND I ALONE, WHO DID BIRTH THE COMING TRAGEDY.

BECAUSE OF MY FOLLY, I HAVE NOT THE RING OF POWER FORGED BY EVIL ALBERICH-- AND ONE DAY, I FEAR THE GNOMELING MAY RECOVER IT, AND BRING DOOMSDAY CRASHING DOWN AROUND THE HEADS OF THE GODS.

ON THAT DAY, WE OF ASGARD WILL FIGHT-- AYE, AND ALL THE SLAIN WARRIORS IN VALHALLA.

* SEE PREVIOUS ISSUES.--ROY.

AND WE MIGHT HAVE WON THE DAY, E'EN THE DAY OF RAGNAROK--

BUT NOW, HELP WHICH ODIN GAVE, ODIN MUST TAKE AWAY-- AND THUS SIEGMUND DIES!



YET-- HOLD! MINE OWN WORDS NOW DO SPUR MY THOUGHTS.

WHAT IS NEEDED HERE-- IS A HERO NEER HELPED BY MY POWER, AS SIEGMUND WAS.

SUCH A ONE MIGHT ACCOMPLISH-- WHAT MINE OATHS DO BIND ME FROM DOING!



I-- DO NOT UNDERSTAND ALL THOU HAST SAID, ALL-FATHER.

NOR WERT THOU MEANT TO.

GO NOW! DO AS I HAVE COMMANDED THEE!



AS FOR ME, I SIT HERE BENEATH THE CURSE LAID UPON ME BY THE RING-POWERED MAGIC OF ALBERICH--

--AND HE WHO ALONE MAY LIFT IT FROM ME, IS NOT YET BORN.



AND SO, UPON A WINGED STEED, BRUNNHILDA, FIRST AMONG VALKYRIES, WINGS DOWN TOWARD EARTH...

...THOUGH NEVER BEFORE WITH SO HEAVY A SPEAR OR HEART.



MEANWHILE, BEHOLD SIEGMUND AND FAIR SIEGLINDA ASCENDING FROM OUT A DEEP GORGE...

SIEGMUND, BELOVED-- I AM SO TIRED--!

THEN WE'LL REST HERE A WHILE.



YOU SHOULD FLEE, DEAREST ONE-- LEAVE ME HERE FOR MY HATEFUL HUSBAND TO FIND.

I HAVE DISGRACED US BOTH-- AND SURELY NO GOOD THING CAN COME OF OUR LOVE.

THAT IS FOR THOSE IN ASGARD TO KNOW, NOT WE.

BUT, I'LL NOT FLEE-- NOR SHALL YOU!



HERE I SHALL STAND, AND WAIT FOR HUNTING THE VILE!

AND MY SWORD, CALLED NEEDFUL, SHALL TASTE HIS HEART'S BLOOD!

THEN VENGEANCE SHALL BE YOURS, FOR THE INDIGNITIES YOU'VE SUFFERED AT HIS ROUGH HANDS.



VENGEANCE, I SAY!

SKRAAK!

TWO MEN, THEN, WITH BUT A SINGLE CRY UPON THEIR LIPS-- AS EACH CRAVES REVENGE.



AND THAT NIGHT, AS SIEGLINDA SLEEPS NEARBY SIEGMUND, HUMAN-BORN OF OF WANDERING ODIN, SEEMS TO HEAR THE BAYING HOUNDS OF HUNTING, FAR OFF IN THE DISTANCE, YET COMING EVER CLOSER.

BUT PERHAPS IT IS ONLY A WAKING DREAM.



THEN, WE'LL PAST THE WITCHING HOUR--

YOU! WHO IN THE WAR-GOD'S NAME--?

I AM ONE YOU WILL FOLLOW SOON, SIEGMUND.

ONLY DOOMED SOULS MAY SEE BRUNNHILDA.



A VALKYRIE-- SENT TO CARRY ME OFF TO VALHALLA!

BUT I DEFY YOU-- FOR I'LL NOT LEAVE SIEGLINDA HERE TO HUNTING'S TENDER MERCIES.

YOU HAVE LOOKED UPON MY WITHERING GLANCE, AND HAVE NO MORE CHOICE.

YOU SHALL DIE-- BY HUNTING'S HAND!



HUNDING! NO! IF I MUST BE SLAIN, LET IT BE BY A MORE WORTHY FOE!

THY CONQUEROR BE NOT MINE TO DECIDE.

BUT, WHAT OF MY SWORD, CALLED NEEDFUL?



IT WAS FORGED SO THAT I MIGHT WIN THIS NIGHT'S BATTLE, AND MANY ANOTHER AFTER THAT.

AND NOW YOU SAY IT WILL NOT HELP ME?



HE WHO GAVE THE BLADE ITS POWER, NOW HATH TAKEN IT AWAY.

HE HAS CAST HIS MIGHTY SPELL FROM THE SWORD.

NOW ART THOU RESIGNED TO THY FATE, SIEGMUND?



MAY! NOT WHILE SIEGLINDA SLEEPS, BETRAYED BY MY COMING DEATH!



THOU DOST CARE-- SO MUCH FOR HER, THEN?

MORE THAN FOR MY VERY BREATH!



IF I MUST PERISH, THEN, TAKE ME NOT TO ACCURSED VALHALLA!

TO SERVE THE DEATH-QUEEN HELA WOULD PLEASE ME MORE.



PERHAPS I SHOULD BRING HER TWO LIVES-- TO SPARE MY BELOVED THE VIOLENCE OF HUNDING.

NO! SLAY HER NOT!



THY LOVE FOR THIS WOMAN HATH MOVED ME--AND THIS I, BRUNNHILDA, NOW SWEAR TO THEE:

BOTH THOU AND SIEGLINDA SHALL LIVE-- AND THOU SHALT SLAY HUNDING THIS NIGHT!

BE THIS TRUE?

I HAVE SAID IT.

HO, WOE-KING!



HUNDING!

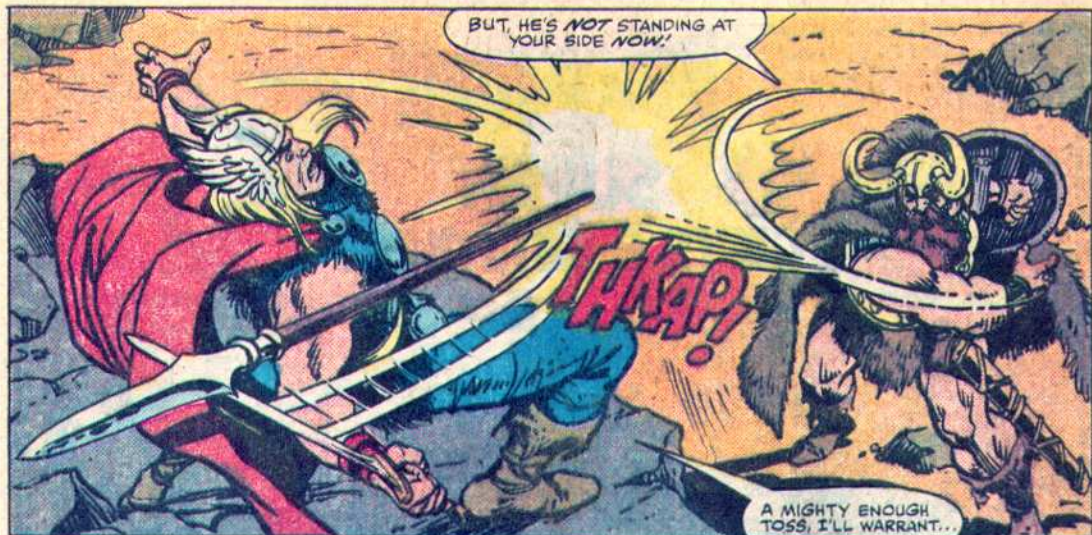
DO YOU STAY AND FIGHT, BARE HANDS AGAINST MY SPEAR?

OR MUST I CHASE YOU DOWN?



YOU THINK ME WEAPONLESS, DOG OF A MURDEROUS CLAN... BUT I TOOK THIS SWORD FROM THE TREE THAT GROWS IN YOUR OWN HOUSE.

SOME MEDDLE-SOME GOD HELPED YOU, THEN...



BUT, HE'S **NOT** STANDING AT YOUR SIDE **NOW!**

THWAP!

A MIGHTY ENOUGH TOSS, I'LL WARRANT..



YET, HERE'S A BLOW FAR MIGHTIER!

WRACK!

WE'LL FIGHT IT OUT HAND TO HAND, THEN.



AND SOON, YOU'LL LIE LIFELESS AT MY FEET!

WOULD THAT I COULD DIE-- IN HIS STEAD!



FEAR NOT, SIEGLINDA. YOU KNOW ME FOR THE VALKYRIE I AM... SHIELD-MAIDEN OF ODIN...

...WHILE FRIGGA IS FAR AWAY.

MY POWER WILL PROTECT YOUR BELOVED FROM HURT.



BEHOLD, EVEN NOW--!

HAH! NOW NOTHING SHIELDS YOU FROM MY WRATH.

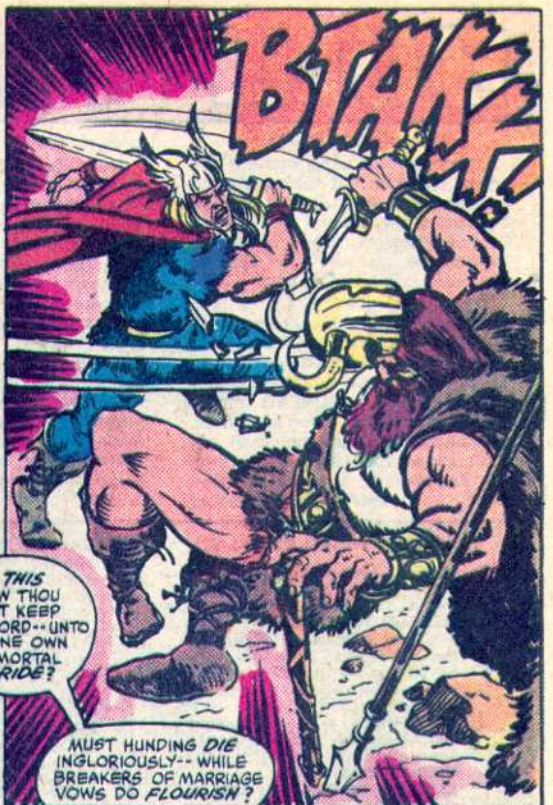
FRIGGA! HELP THOU THINE AVENGER!

AND, IN DISTANT ASGARD, HUNTING'S FEARFUL CRY IS HEARD...



BEHOLD, HUSBAND!

IS THIS HOW THOU DOST KEEP MY WORD--UNTO THINE OWN IMMORTAL BRIDE?



BTAK

MUST HUNTING DIE INGLORIOUSLY-- WHILE BREAKERS OF MARRIAGE VOWS DO FLOURISH?



THE CRUDE DEFENDER BE OF NO CONCERN TO ME, FRIGGA.

YET, I DID GIVE A COMMAND UNTO BRUNNHILDA, FOREMOST OF MY DIVINE VALKYRIES...

...AND SHE HATH CAST IT ASIDE, LIKE UNTO A GOULD DRAINED DRY OF WINE.



NO MATTER WHAT THE COST, DEEP WITHIN MINE OWN BREAST, THE WORD OF ODIN MUST EVER STAND SUPREME--

--OR ELSE THE UNIVERSE FALLS!

THUS, I MUST SADLY DO... THAT WHEREIN BRUNNHILDA HATH FAILED ME!



UP, VILLAIN! YOU WERE FULL OF OATHS A MOMENT AGO, CONCERNING THINGS YOU WOULD DO TO ME.

FULFILL THEM NOW, WITH THE SPEAR THAT REMAINS TO YOU--

--OR ELSE I'LL SHEATH THE MY HEAVEN-FORGED SWORD IN YOUR FLESH--

--MORE FIRMLY THAN EVER IT WAS SHEATHED IN WOOD!

WITH HIS LAST DESPERATE VESTIGE OF STRENGTH, A BEATEN HUNTING RAISES HIS SPEAR BEFORE HIM...



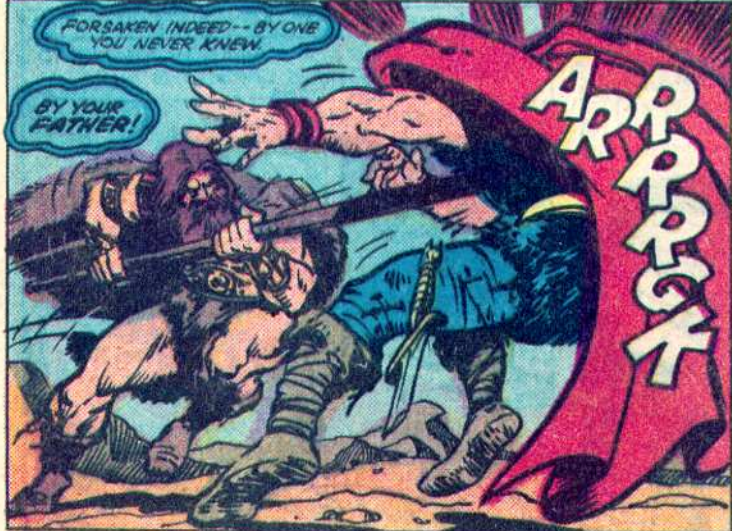
...EVEN AS, THOUGH SIEGMUND SEES IT NOT, LORD ODIN DOES THE SAME!

WHAT--?



MY SWORD! THIS BLADE ENCHANTED--WHICH ONCE DEPIED ALL OUTSIDE POWER--NOW SHATTERS AGAINST A MERE WOOD-HAFTED SPEAR!?

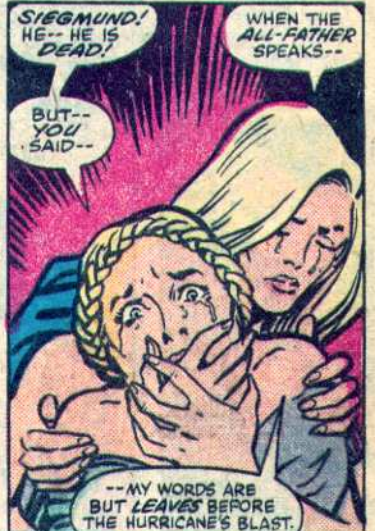
SURELY, THEN-- I AM FORSAKEN!



FORSAKEN INDEED-- BY ONE YOU NEVER KNEW.

BY YOUR FATHER!

APPRAH



SIEGMUND! HE-- HE IS DEAD!

WHEN THE ALL-FATHER SPEAKS--

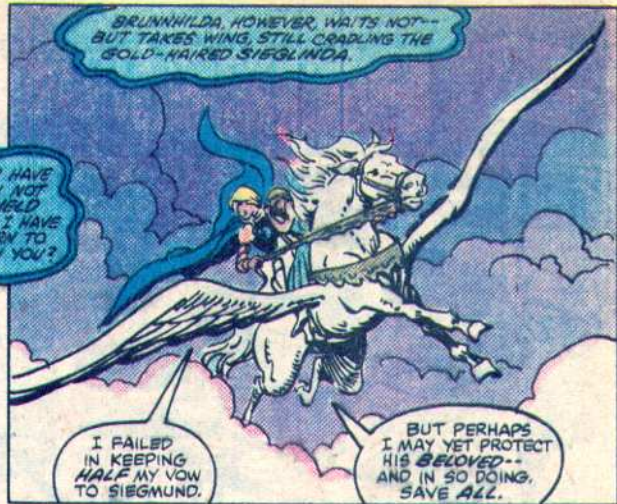
BUT-- YOU SAID--

--MY WORDS ARE BUT LEAVES BEFORE THE HURRICANE'S BLAST.



NOW AS HUNTING PULLS HIS BLOODED SPEAR FROM SIEGMUND'S UNHAIVING CHEST-- DO YOU NOT FEEL LIKEWISE THE STING OF HIS DEATH, GOD OF THUNDER?

AND HAVE YOU NOT BEHELD WHAT I HAVE SWORN TO SHOW YOU?



BRUNNHILDA, HOWEVER, WAITS NOT-- BUT TAKES WING, STILL CRADLING THE GOLD-HAIRED SIEGLINDA.

I FAILED IN KEEPING HALF MY VOW TO SIEGMUND.

BUT PERHAPS I MAY YET PROTECT HIS BELOVED-- AND IN SO DOING, SAVE ALL.

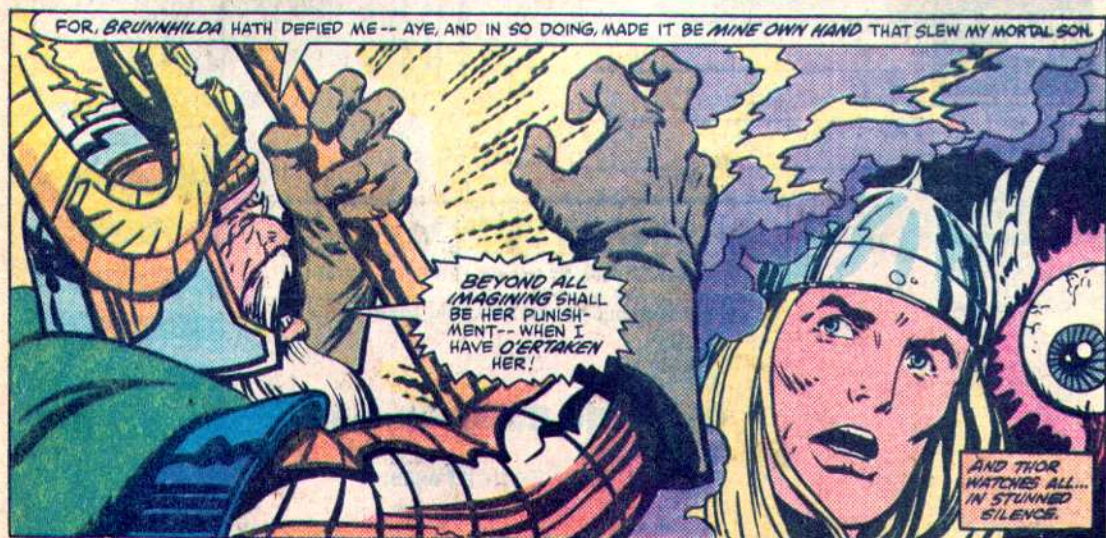


WHILE BELOW...

AWAY, HUNTING! GO KNEEL BEFORE FRIGGA IN DEATH!

TELL HER THAT ODIN'S SPEAR AVENGED HER SHAME!

YET, MINE OWN VENGEANCE BE NOT AT AN END...



FOR, BRUNNHILDA HATH DEFIED ME-- AYE, AND IN SO DOING, MADE IT BE MINE OWN HAND THAT SLEW MY MORTAL SON.

BEYOND ALL IMAGINING SHALL BE HER PUNISHMENT-- WHEN I HAVE O'ERTAKEN HER!

AND THOR WATCHES ALL... IN STUNNED SILENCE.

NEXT ISSUE: **REVENGE AND REBIRTH!**