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THE MIGHTY THOR



pollard

...AT THE MERCY
OF THE
GODS!

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!**

FOR THE LIFE OF ASGARD!

HIGH IN THE ANDES MOUNTAINS, IN THE RUINS OF AN INCAN CITY, THE MIGHTY THOR, GOD OF THUNDER, LIES BATTERED AND UNCONSCIOUS.

ONLY MOMENTS AGO, HE FOUGHT THE GREATEST BATTLE OF HIS TEMPESTUOUS LIFE—AND LOST.

NOW HE RESTS, OBVIOUS TO ALL BUT THE NUMBERS THAT HAS OVERTAKEN HIM, IN THE ARMS OF THE AGELESS EARTH GODDESS WHO REVEALED HERSELF TO BE HIS LONG-LOST MOTHER...

"SLEEP VALIANT SON... DO NOT FEEL THE WOUNDS YOU HAVE INCURRED FOR THE SAKE OF ALL WHO LIVE, AND KNOW THIS, THAT THERE ARE NONE WHO FOUGHT MORE COURAGEOUSLY THAN YOU... NONE OF WHOM I AM MORE PROUD.

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THE EVENTS THAT CONCLUDED THIS DAY BEGAN SCANT YEARS BEFORE WITH THE LANDING OF THE FOURTH CELESTIAL MOST, AN EXPEDITION OF TEN UNIMAGINABLY POWERFUL ALIENS FROM BEYOND KNOWN SPACE.



THEIR PURPOSE WAS TO JUDGE WHETHER MANKIND--WHOSE GENETIC DEVELOPMENT THEY HAD DIRECTED IN AGES PAST--HAD PROVEN ITSELF WORTHY OF CONTINUED EXISTENCE.

LEARNING OF THEIR ARRIVAL, ODIN, THE SUPREME GOD OF ASGARD, SENT HIS IMMORTAL SPIRIT FROM HIS BODY TO ANIMATE THE DREAD DESTROYER--



--A HIGH-INVINCIBLE METALLIC WARRIOR ODIN HAD CONSTRUCTED A MILLENNIUM AGO FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF COMBATING THE CELESTIALS SHOULD THEIR VERDICT BE NAY.

ONCE WITHIN THE DESTROYER, THE ALL-FATHER GATHERED TO HIMSELF THE LIFE ESSENCES OF EVERY GOD IN THE GOLDEN REALM--



--LIFE ESSENCES THAT IN HIS DIVINE WISDOM HE HAD DISTRIBUTED AT THE DAWN OF THE AGE.



GROWING TO BARGANTUAN STATURE, THE DESTROYER SEIZED THE AWESOME ODIN-SWORD, AN ENCHANTED BLADE THAT CONTAINED THE DEADLIEST POWER IN ALL ASGARD.

ARMED FOR BATTLE, THE DESTROYER DESCENDED TO EARTH...



AT ITS SIDE FLEW THE UNCANNY UNI-MIND--

--A GROUP INTELLIGENCE MADE UP OF THE CELESTIALS' FORMER BARTHLY SERVITORS, THE ETERNALS.



WITH A SINGLE STRIKING BLAST, THE UNI-MIND WAS DISINTEGRATED INTO ITS COMPONENT PARTS...

... WHILE THE DESTROYER LEAPED INTO THE FRAY, SAVAGELY STRIKING THE ENIGMATIC ALIENS WHO SURROUND IT.

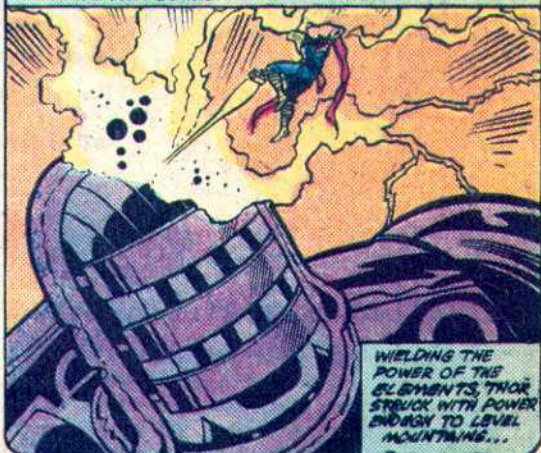


BUT EVEN THE GREATEST WEAPON OF THE GODS WAS NO MATCH FOR THE CELESTIALS.



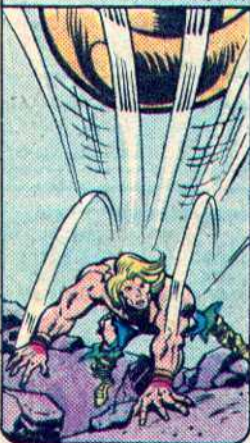
IN A PAROKYSM OF COSMIC ENERGY, THEY DESTROYED THE DESTROYER, SETTING ADRIPT THE LIFE FORCE OF ALL ASGARD.

THOR, THE ONLY GOD NOT IN ASGARD AT THE TIME OF THE GATHERING, WITNESSED HIS PEOPLE'S DEWISE WITH RAGE, AND THREW HIMSELF INTO THE CONFLAGRATION TO AVENGE HIS PERISHED PEOPLE...



WIELDING THE POWER OF THE ELEMENTS, THOR STRUCK WITH POWER ENOUGH TO LEVEL MOUNTAINS...

... BUT THE CELESTIALS WITHSTOOD HIS FUTILE BOMBARDMENT. FINALLY, WITH THE LAST VESTIGE OF HIS GODLY MIGHT, THOR HURLED THE FALLEN ODINSWORD--



--IMBEDDING IT IN THE CHEST OF ARISHEM, LEADER OF THE FOURTH HOST.

BUT ARISHEM SIMPLY WITHDREW THE SWORD FROM HIS IMPERVIOUS FORM, AND AFTER ANALYZING ITS MYSTIC PROPERTIES, VAPORIZED IT.



FOR THOR, ALL HOPE HAD STRAYED, WHEN SUDDENLY THE ELDER GODDESS OF THE VERY WORLD THE CELESTIALS SOUGHT TO JUDGE-- MATERIALIZED.



ACCOMPANYING HER WERE THE YOUNG GODS, TWELVE CHOSEN MORTALS WHO EMBODIED THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE HUMAN RACE.

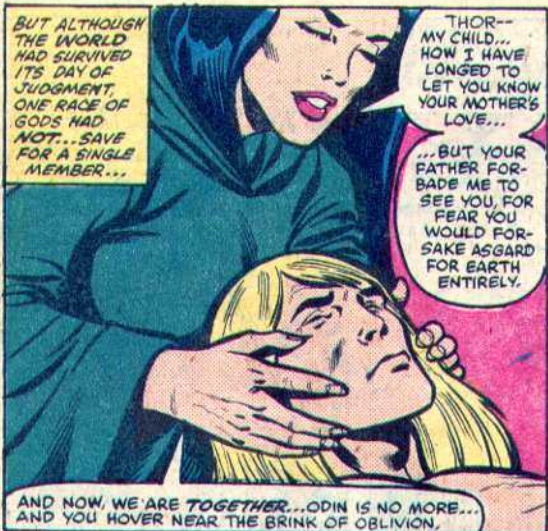
MOTHER EARTH OFFERED THE CELESTIALS EARTH'S FINEST CHILDREN, IN EXCHANGE FOR THE WORLD'S SALVATION.

AFTER DUE DELIBERATION, THE CELESTIALS ACCEPTED THE OFFERING, AND ASCENDED TO THE HEAVENS, THEIR CHARGES IN TOW.



THE CELESTIALS' JUDGMENT HAD BEEN GIVEN-- EARTH SHALL ENDURE!

BUT ALTHOUGH THE WORLD HAD SURVIVED ITS DAY OF JUDGMENT, ONE RACE OF GODS HAD NOT... SAVE FOR A SINGLE MEMBER...



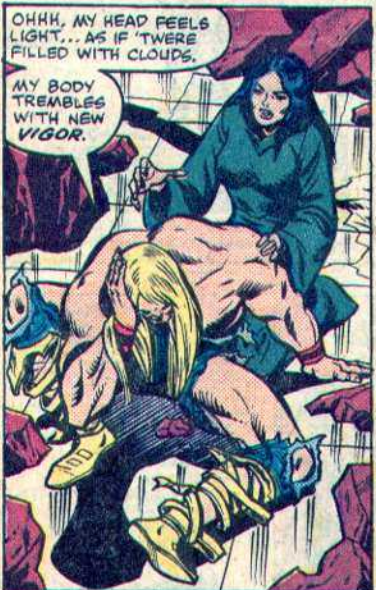
THOR-- MY CHILD... HOW I HAVE LONGED TO LET YOU KNOW YOUR MOTHER'S LOVE...
... BUT YOUR FATHER FORBODE ME TO SEE YOU, FOR FEAR YOU WOULD FORSAKE ASGARD FOR EARTH ENTIRELY.

AND NOW, WE ARE TOGETHER... ODIN IS NO MORE... AND YOU HOVER NEAR THE BRINK OF OBLIVION.

BUT ALTHOUGH YOUR FELLOW GODS HAVE ALL PASSED BEYOND THE PALE OF MY POWER, YOU, MY LOVED ONE, HAVE NOT...



AND BY THE RITES OF RENEWAL AT MY COMMAND, I SHALL HEAL THE WOUNDS OF YOUR FLESH AND MIND...



OHhh, MY HEAD FEELS LIGHT... AS IF 'TWERE FILLED WITH CLOUDS.

MY BODY TREMBLES WITH NEW VIGOR.



... YOU! THEN 'T WAS NO DREAM...

BEFORE I SUCCUMBED, I HEARD THEE CALL ME BLOODSON, CANST THOU TRULY BE-- MY MOTHER?



YES, MY CHILD.

BUT WHO ART THOU? WHY HAS ODIN KEPT THINE IDENTITY CONCEALED FROM ME?

DID I HEAR THEE CALL THYSELF THE EARTH GODDESS?

I HAVE BEEN CALLED MANY THINGS OVER THE EONS OF MY EXISTENCE... EVERY PANTHEON OF GODS THAT HAS EVER LIVED HAS HAD ITS OWN NAME FOR ME:

GAEA... NERTHA... ADITI... COATLIQUE... RANGI... ALL THESE NAMES I HAVE ANSWERED TO, ALL THESE FORMS I HAVE ASSUMED... AND MORE.



MOST KNOW ME SIMPLY AS MOTHER EARTH, THE NATURE-SPIRIT OF ALL LIFE ON THIS FERTILE SPHERE.



I AM THE LAST OF THE ELDER GODS WHOSE EXISTENCE PREDATES THAT OF ALL OTHER GODS AND MEN.

MY KIND WAS THE *FIRST* OF ALL LIFE FORMS SPAWNED BY THE POTENT *SPIRITUAL FORCE* OF THIS PLANET. 'T WAS WE WHO SHAPED THE VERY FACE OF THE WORLD. WHEN MY KINSMEN WERE DRIVEN FROM THIS PLANE AS IF DEMONS, I REMAINED BEHIND, MY ESSENCE INFUSED IN ALL LIVING THINGS.



BUT HOW DIDST THOU COME TO BE MY MOTHER?

"AFTER ODIN UNLOCKED THE *LIVING ATOMS* STORED IN THE RELICS OF THE PREVIOUS AGE OF GODS, AND FORMED THE FIRST GENERATION OF THE *NEW ASGARD*--



"-- HE DESIRED FOR HIMSELF A SON *UNLIKE* ANY OTHER... A GOD WHOSE STRENGTH WOULD NOT BE SOLELY DERIVED FROM THE SAME *SOURCE* AS HIS OWN...

"TOWARD THIS END, HE SOJOURNED TO *EARTH* TO SEEK THE COUNSEL OF THE ELDER GOD-- *DESS* OF LIFE HERSELF-- HE CAME TO ME.



"I APPEARED TO HIM IN ONE OF MY MOST VOLUPTUOUS GUISES. HE CALLED ME *JORD*.

"IN THE DAYS WE SPENT IN MEDITATION, ODIN GREW TO LOVE ME WITH ALL HIS HEART AND ALL HIS MIND AND ALL HIS SOUL...



"THUS WE CONSUMMATED OUR LOVE.

"WHILE YOU GREW WITHIN ME, ODIN CONSTRUCTED A SPECIAL PALACE IN THE VERY WOMB OF THE EARTH, THERE, ATTENDED BY NYMPHS AND SPRITES I GAVE BIRTH TO YOU...



"AND ON THE JOYOUS DAY THAT ODIN FIRST HELD YOU, HIS NEW-BORN SON, HE WAS TRANSCENDANT WITH RAPTURE.

"WHEN YOU WERE WEANED, YOUR FATHER RELUCTANTLY BADE ME *FAREWELL*. DESPITE HIS MONTHS-LONG STAY ON EARTH, HIS PLACE WAS EVER TO BE IN ETERNAL ASGARD.



"WE AGREED IT WOULD BE BEST FOR YOU TO BE RAISED IN THE WAY OF ASGARD, NOT KNOWING OF YOUR *EARTHLY HERITAGE* TILL IT WAS APPROPRIATE.



"ODIN DELIVERED YOU TO HIS ORDAINED ASGARDIAN WIFE *FRIGGA*, TO RAISE AS HER OWN."

EVEN AS A CHILD, I KNEW FRIGGA WAS NOT MY TRUE MOTHER...

... BUT ODIN MADE IT KNOWN TO ALL THAT THE SUBJECT OF MY MOTHER WAS A FORBIDDEN ONE. 'T'WAS TO SPARE FRIGGA'S FEELINGS, I WOULD SURMISE.

BUT I STILL DO NOT UNDERSTAND WHY ODIN SOUGHT A MATE NOT OF ASGARD.

POSSESSING THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE PREVIOUS AGE OF GODS, YOUR FATHER FORESAW THE NEED FOR A CHAMPION WHOSE POWER ON EARTH WOULD BE FAR GREATER THAN ANY OTHER OF HIS KIND. BECAUSE YOUR MOTHER IS THE VERY GODDESS OF THE EARTH, YOUR STRENGTH HERE IS GREATER THAN THAT OF YOUR FELLOWS.

AT LONG LAST I UNDERSTAND MY GREAT AFFINITY FOR THIS SPHERE.

AND WHAT OF THE TWELVE YOUNG GODS? ARE THEY TOO YOUR OFFSPRING?

ONLY IN SO FAR AS ALL WHO LIVE ON THIS WORLD ARE MY CHILDREN...

"AS THEIR PART IN THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE COMING OF THE FOURTH CELESTIAL HOST, ALL OF THE CHIEF MOTHER-GODDESSES OF EARTH'S MANY PANTHEONS CONVENED IN THE REALM BETWEEN REALMS, EVEN AS THEIR HUSBANDS AND CONSORTS HAD DONE DAYS BEFORE..."

WHILE THE SKY-FATHERS PREPARED FOR EVENTUAL WAR, THE EARTH-MOTHERS LAID THE FOUNDATIONS FOR PEACE. THEY DECIDED TO GROOM FROM AMONG THEIR WORSHIPERS ON EARTH TWELVE WHO EPI TOMIZED MANKIND'S GREAT ATTRIBUTES...

AS SEEN LAST ISSUE... JIM

"AND SO, OVER THE NEXT MILLENNIUM, EACH OF THE CHIEF GODDESSES KEPT WATCH OVER THE CHILDREN OF MAN, LOOKING FOR THE NEWBORN CHILD TO BE THEIR RACE'S HERALD..."

"WHEN THAT CHOSEN CHILD REACHED MATURITY, HE OR SHE WAS CONTACTED BY ONE OF THE GODDESSES MESSENGERS..."

"...WHO UNLEASHED IN THEM THE GODLY ESSENCE POSSESSED BY ALL MANKIND."

"SO DOING, THE GODDESSES SOUGHT TO BRING NEW LIFE INTO THE COSMIC COMMUNITY AND THEREBY SAVE THE WORLD."

"THE LAST THREE CHOSEN ONES TO BE GATHERED WERE MET BY YOUR FRIEND AND COUNTRYMAN NEIMDALL, GUARDIAN OF THE RAINBOW BRIDGE SCANT YEARS BEFORE THE CELESTIALS RETURN..."



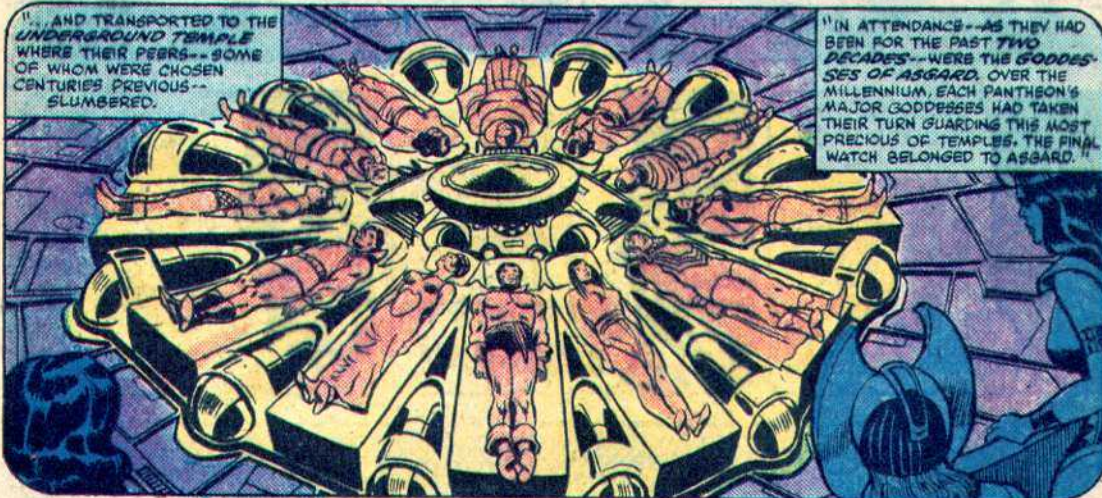
THOR 202-203 -- JIM.

"IN HER ABSENCE FRIGGA HAD ENTRUSTED ODIN TO ATTEND TO THE FINAL ASCENSION OF THE YOUNG GODS, BECAUSE ODIN WAS EVEN THEN CONSERVING HIS STRENGTH FOR THE IMPENDING BATTLE WITH THE CELESTIALS YOUR FATHER MANEUVERED THE BIOSPHERIC BEING CALLED RSO-PRIME TO ACTIVATE THE FINAL CHOSEN ONES LATENT GODHOOD..."



"AND SO, THE LAST OF THE TWELVE YOUNG GODS WERE BAPTIZED IN COSMIC FIRE..."

"... AND TRANSPORTED TO THE UNDERGROUND TEMPLE WHERE THEIR PEERS-- SOME OF WHOM WERE CHOSEN CENTURIES PREVIOUS-- SLUMBERED."



"IN ATTENDANCE--AS THEY HAD BEEN FOR THE PAST TWO DECADES--WERE THE GODDESSES OF ASGARD. OVER THE MILLENNIUM, EACH PANTHEON'S MAJOR GODDESSES HAD TAKEN THEIR TURN GUARDING THIS MOST PRECIOUS OF TEMPLES. THE FINAL WATCH BELONGED TO ASGARD."

"THIS THEN IS THE SECRET MISSION 'PON WHICH THE GODDESSES LEFT THE GLEAMING REALM NOT LONG AFTER I TOOK UP MY LATEST MORTAL IDENTITY, DON BLAKE!"



"UNTIL THEIR RECENT RETURN, NONE KNEW OF THEIR WHEREABOUTS--SAVE ODIN."

"YOU MUST FORGIVE YOUR FATHER HIS MANY SECRETS AND VEXING MOODS THESE CENTURIES PAST. HE HAD BEEN UNDER AN INCREDIBLE STRAIN ANTICIPATING THE CELESTIALS..."

"THOU HAST ILLUMINATED MANY SHADOWY AREAS OF EVENTS PAST. I CAN NOW GUESS WHY ODIN ONCE SENT ME ON A QUEST FOR THE ORIGINS OF THE WORLD-DEVOURING GALACTUS... AND AS SOON AS I DISCOVERED GALACTUS' SECRETS HE STRANGELY LOST ALL INTEREST. ODIN MUST HAVE FEARED GALACTUS WAS A RENEGADE CELESTIAL."

"EVEN THE THREATS OF PREMATURE RAGNAROK WHICH OCCURRED WITH ALARMING FREQUENCY THESE DECADES PAST WERE ODIN'S SECRET DOING... AS HE STRIVED TO SQUELCH THE FORCES OF EVIL FOR FEAR THEY WOULD ATTACK IN EARNEST WHILE HE WAS ENGAGED WITH THE CELESTIALS!"



THOR 275 -- JIM.

**THOR* 168 -- JIM AGAIN.

I THANK THEE FOR THY ENLIGHTENMENT...MOTHER. BUT NOW I MUST HIE ME BACK TO ASGARD-- TO APOLOGIZE TO ODIN FOR EVER DOUBTING HIS WISDOM, AND TO CELEBRATE THE VICTORY WON THIS DAY.

HOWEVER, FIRST I MUST LOCATE MY HAMMER LOST 'MIDST THIS RUBBLE DURING THE BATTLE.

I SHALL CAUSE THE GROUND TO YIELD IT UP TO YOU.

MY THANKS.

'STRANGE... I CANNOT RECALL THE REASON WHY MINE HAMMER DID NOT RETURN TO ME, AND NOW THAT I THINK OF IT SURELY IT HAS BEEN MORE THAN A MINUTE SINCE LAST I HELD MJOLNIR...YET I HAVE NOT BEEN TRANSFORMED TO MY HUMAN FORM, AS PER ODIN'S ENCHANTMENT!

THOR... HAS THE MEMORY OF SO TRAUMATIC AN EVENT TRULY BEEN WASHED AWAY?

THE REASON WHY ODIN'S SPELLS NO LONGER HOLD SWAY IS--

-- ODIN IS DEAD!

DEAD? YES... I REMEMBER NOW!

ODIN'S LIFE FORCE-- AND THAT OF ALL MY PEOPLE-- WAS SCATTERED FAR FROM THEIR FORMS WHEN THE CELESTIALS SLAYED THE DESTROYER! HOW COULD I HAVE FORGOTTEN SUCH?!

WHEN I HEALED YOUR BODY'S WOUNDS, I FEAR I EASED YOUR MIND'S PAIN AS WELL.

OH, MOTHER--HAVE I GAINED THEE ONLY TO HAVE LOST ALL ELSE DEAR TO ME?

MY SON, RAGNAROK--THE TWILIGHT OF ASGARD--HAS OCCURRED, AND YOU ARE ITS SOLE SURVIVOR.

BUT THIS IS NOT THE WAY IT WAS FORETOLD TO END!

WAS IT NOT? HAVE NOT ALL THE ANCIENT PROPHECIES BEEN FILLED BY YOUR FATHER'S RECENT MACHINATIONS?

* THOR # 27B. -- JIM.

E'EN IF SO, THERE MUST BE A WAY TO REUNITE MY PEOPLE'S BODIES AND SOULS! THERE MUST!

GODS ARE MANIFESTATIONS OF A WORLD'S *SPIRITUAL LIFE-FORCE*, GIVEN SHAPE AND SUSTENANCE BY THE COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS OF ITS HIGHEST PHYSICAL LIFE-FORM. A GOD'S POWER STEMS FROM THE ETHEREAL ENERGY OF THE *HUMAN MIND*.

AS LONG AS THERE IS *BELIEF* OR *KNOWLEDGE* OF A GOD, HE WILL LIVE.

OVER THE PAST CENTURIES, BELIEF IN ASGARD HAS *WANED*. WHAT LITTLE REMAINS WAS NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO SURVIVE THE BRUTAL JOLT CAUSED BY THE DESTROYER'S DEMISE. I AM *SORRY*, MY SON...

NOOOO! BY ALL THAT IS *HOLY*, THERE MUST BE A WAY!!!

IF MANKIND DOES NOT HAVE THE ABILITY TO RESTORE MY PEOPLE, I SHALL SEEK ELSEWHERE!

PERHAPS THERE *IS* AN ALTERNATIVE. YOU MUST GO TO THE *OTHER PANTHEONS*...

...IF EACH OF THEM WILL RELINQUISH A PORTION OF ITS *POWER* TO YOU, YOU MAY HAVE ENOUGH TO RESURRECT YOUR PEOPLE.

I SHALL NOT FAIL. THANK YOU, MOTHER.

THOUGH I CANNOT TRAVEL FROM THIS SPHERE, I SHALL GUIDE YOU ON YOUR JOURNEY. MAY ALL THE GODS BE WITH YOU, THOR! *BLESSED BE!*

I PRAY WE MEET AGAIN.

I SHALL GO TO *OLYMPUS* FIRST, FOR THEY ARE FAMILIAR TO... *HOLD!* THEY CONGREGATE THE *ETERNALS*.

'TWOULD APPEAR THEY HAVE ALL RECOVERED FROM THE DISSOLUTION OF THE *UNI-MIND!*

YET WHY DO THEY MULL ABOUT SO SOLEMNLY?

DESPITE THE GRAVITY OF THE TASK BEFORE ME, 'TWOULD BE ONLY PROPER TO BID MY ALLIES FAREWELL BEFORE I QUIT THIS PLANE!

THOR! AJAK, WHY DO THY PEOPLE SEEM SO SOMBER-- EH, DO MY EYES DECEIVE ME?



NO, THUNDER GOD, THEY DO NOT, ZURAS, OUR KING, IS DEAD. HE WAS THE CORE OF THE UNI-MIND. WHEN THE CELESTIALS STRUCK, HE TOOK THE BRUNT OF THE BLAST, SPARING THE REST OF US. THUS DOES A FATHER SACRIFICE HIMSELF FOR HIS CHILDREN.



BUT IKARIS-- THOU ONCE SAID THAT ETERNALS CANNOT DIE!

WHAT THE CELESTIALS CREATED, THEY CAN ALSO DESTROY.

THEN THOU MUST GO WITH ME ON MY QUEST. I SEEK TO REVIVE THE FALLEN GODS OF ASGARD BY COLLECTING ENERGY FROM THE OTHER GODS OF EARTH.



I'M AFRAID THAT WILL NOT HELP ZURAS, THOUGH ETERNALS HAVE KNOWN WORSHIP. WE ARE NOT GODS, EMPOWERED BY THE BELIEF OF OUR LESSERS, WE ARE SIMPLY A HIGHER ORDER OF HUMAN.



I HAD... FORGOTTEN.

THOU WERT A GOOD AND NOBLE SIRE, GREAT ZURAS. THY MEMORY SHALL ENDURE. BE AT PEACE.



NOW I MUST LEAVE THE ETERNALS TO THEIR GRIEF... IF I DELAY MUCH LONGER, EARTH MAY HAVE LOST MORE THAN ITS CHIEF ETERNAL.



THOR-- I OVERHEARD ABOUT THE QUEST YOU ARE ABOUT TO UNDERTAKE.



SERSI?

IT SEEMS TO ME YOU ARE DEAD FAR TOO HUMBLINGLY FOR SO MOMENTOUS A MISSION.

MY TATTERED CLOTHING REFORMS ABOUT ME! BUT I THOUGHT THOU WERT BUT A MISTRESS OF ILLUSIONS.



THAT IS WHAT I HAD WISHED YOU TO BELIEVE. I AM ACTUALLY A MOLECULAR REARRANGER.

MY THANKS, ETERNAL, SOMEDAY I SHALL RETURN THY KINDNESS.

FAREWELL TO THEE.



HURLING HIS INCREDIBLE URU HAMMER WITH ALL HIS MIGHT, THE THUNDER GOD HOLDS FAST TO ITS TRONK AND STREAKS INTO THE STRATOSPHERE. THERE HE USES THE MALLET'S POWER TO TRANSCEND THE FABRIC OF INFINITY ITSELF...



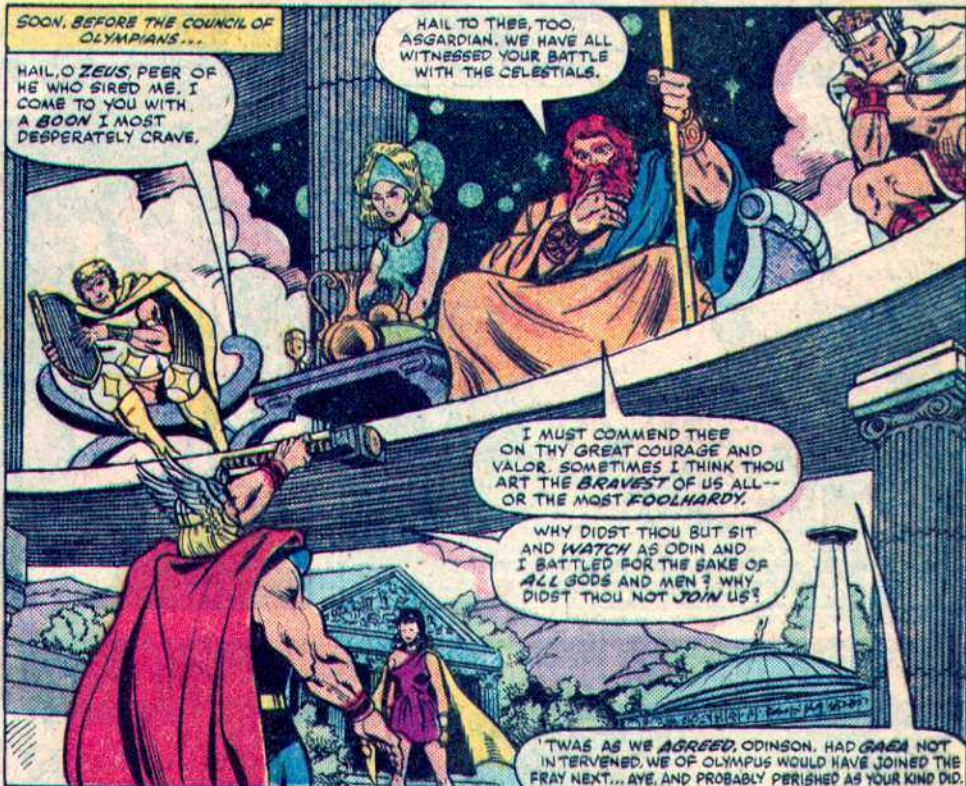
'TIS FORTUNATE THAT ALL-FATHER ODIN'S... STATE... AFFECTS ONLY MY HAMMER'S ENCHANTMENTS. ITS INNATE SPACE-SPANNING POWERS SEEM INTACT!

THROUGH THE SPACE BETWEEN MYTH-REALMS THOR TRAVELS. HIS DESTINATION--THE OTHER-WORLDLY SPIRES OF MOUNT OLYMPUS, HOME OF THE GODS OF ANCIENT GREECE AND ROME...

SOON, BEFORE THE COUNCIL OF OLYMPIANS...

HAIL, O ZEUS, PEER OF HE WHO Sired ME. I COME TO YOU WITH A BOON I MOST DESPERATELY CRAVE.

HAIL TO THEE, TOO, ASGARDIAN. WE HAVE ALL WITNESSED YOUR BATTLE WITH THE CELESTIALS.



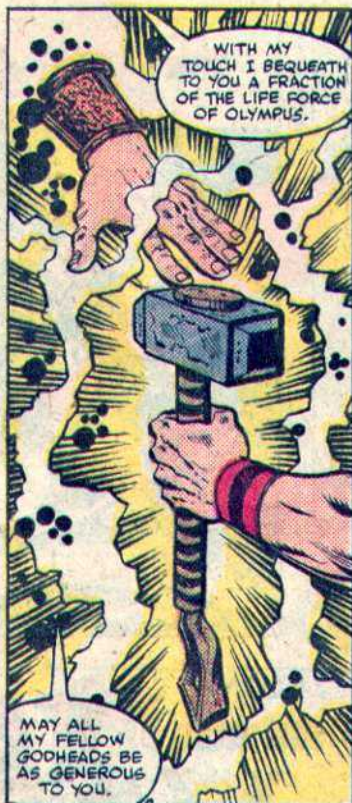
I MUST COMMEND THEE ON THY GREAT COURAGE AND VALOR. SOMETIMES I THINK THOU ART THE BRAVEST OF US ALL-- OR THE MOST FOOLHARDY.

WHY DIDST THOU BUT SIT AND WATCH AS ODIN AND I BATTLED FOR THE SAKE OF ALL GODS AND MEN? WHY DIDST THOU NOT JOIN US?

'T WAS AS WE AGREED, ODINSON, HAD GAEN NOT INTERVENED, WE OF OLYMPUS WOULD HAVE JOINED THE FRAY NEXT... AYE, AND PROBABLY PERISHED AS YOUR KIND DID.

I AM TOLD THAT ODIN AND ALL ASGARD MIGHT BE SAVED IF I CAN OBTAIN A SMALL PORTION OF EACH PANTHEON'S POWER...






A scene from a comic book panel showing Thor kneeling on the left, wearing his blue tunic and red cape. He is facing a group of Egyptian deities standing on the right. One deity is holding a staff. The background shows a temple interior with columns and a statue.

WE, THE GODS OF ANCIENT EGYPT, ARE PERHAPS THE OLDEST SURVIVING PANTHEON OF EARTH.

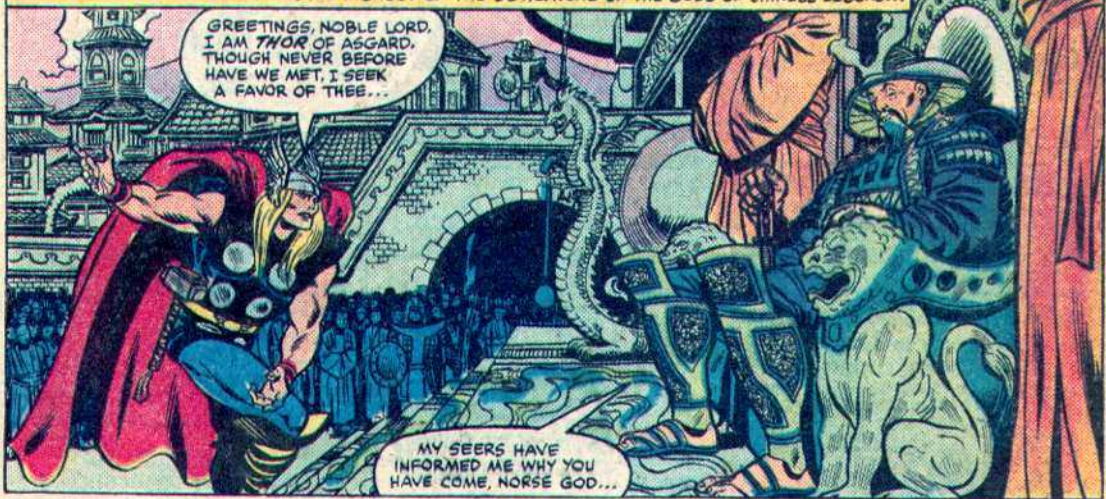
I HOPE TO BESTOW UPON ASGARD THE LONG LIFE WE HAVE KNOWN.

A scene from a comic book panel showing Thor flying through space. He is wearing his blue tunic and red cape, and is holding a mallet. The background is a dark space with stars and a large, glowing red and white circular object.

BIDDING THE EGYPTIAN DEITIES FAREWELL, THE MIGHTY THOR ONCE AGAIN SPEEDS BETWEEN THE DIMENSIONS WHICH SEPARATE THE MANY GOD-REALMS, PROPELLED BY HIS MYSTIC MALLET...


THUS FAR THERE HAS BEEN NO PROBLEM GATHERING THE POWER I NEED, BUT THE GREEKS AND THE EGYPTIANS BE ALLIES OF ASGARD. HOW SHALL I FARE AMONGST STRANGERS?

SOON, IN THE DOMAIN OF TA-LO, THE HIGHEST OF THE 36 HEAVENS OF THE GODS OF CHINESE LEGEND...


A scene from a comic book panel showing Thor standing on the left, wearing his blue tunic and red cape. He is in a traditional Chinese temple setting with a large archway and a crowd of people. He is looking towards a man sitting on a throne on the right. The man is wearing a blue robe and a hat, and is surrounded by attendants. A large white lion is also visible.

GREETINGS, NOBLE LORD. I AM THOR OF ASGARD, THOUGH NEVER BEFORE HAVE WE MET. I SEEK A FAVOR OF THEE...

MY SEERS HAVE INFORMED ME WHY YOU HAVE COME, NORSE GOD...

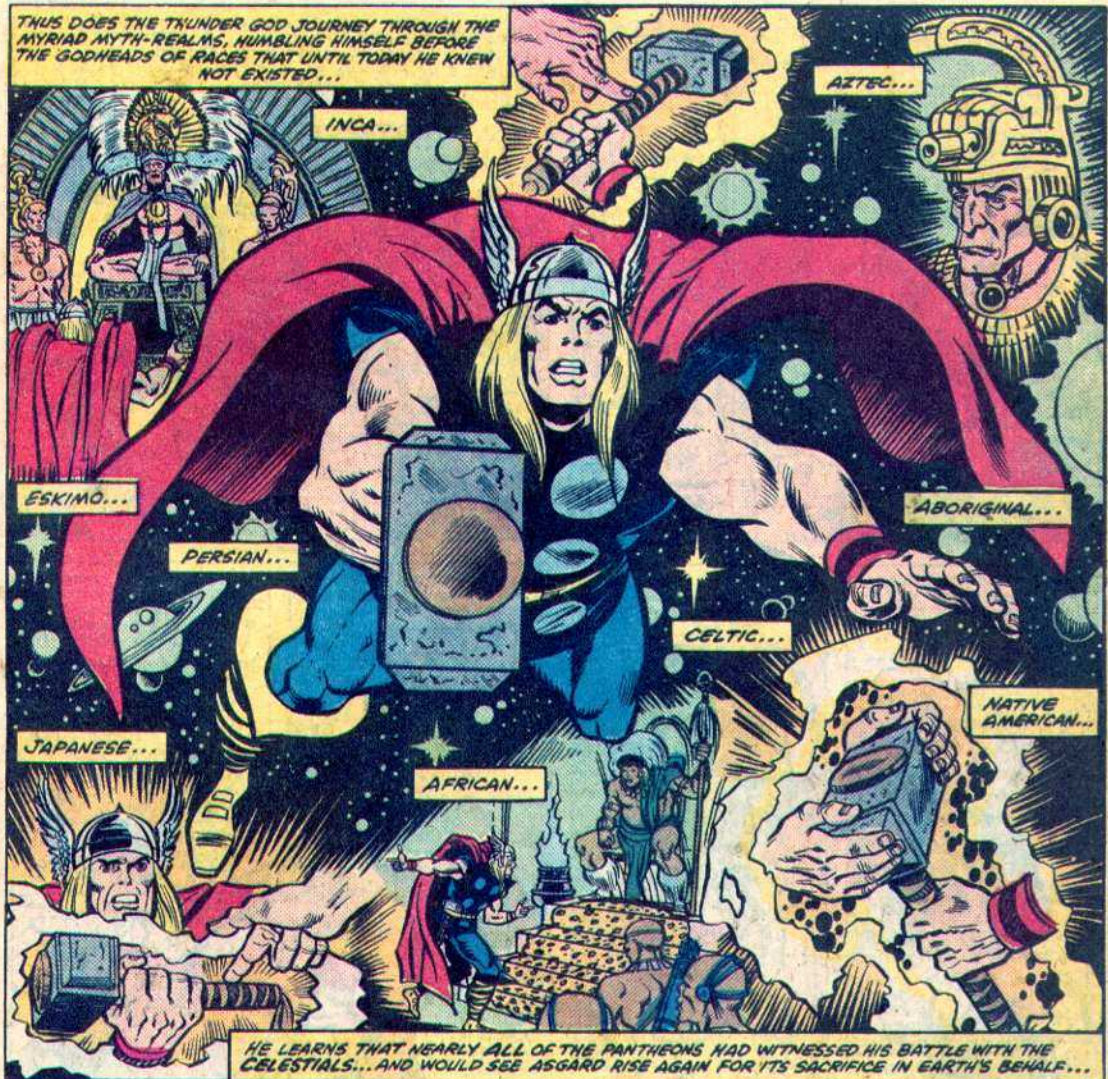
A scene from a comic book panel showing Thor on the left, wearing his blue tunic and red cape. He is receiving a glowing, rectangular object from a man on the right. The man is wearing a blue robe and a hat, and is surrounded by attendants. The scene is filled with bright yellow and orange light.

BY THE POWER INVESTED ME AS JADE EMPEROR OF THE GODS, I, YU-HUANG, DO FREELY GIVE TO YOU A PORTION OF MY PEOPLE'S POWER.

A scene from a comic book panel showing Thor on the left, wearing his blue tunic and red cape. He is holding a large, ornate drum. The drum is decorated with intricate patterns and has a large handle. Thor is looking towards the right, where a man is visible. The scene is filled with bright yellow and orange light.

AND ON BEHALF OF MY RACE, YU-HUANG, I THANK THEE. THE SPLENDORS OF YOUR CITY ARE ONLY SURPASSED BY YOUR GRACIOUSNESS.

THUS DOES THE THUNDER GOD JOURNEY THROUGH THE MYRIAD MYTH-REALMS, HUMBLING HIMSELF BEFORE THE GODHEADS OF RACES THAT UNTIL TODAY HE KNEW NOT EXISTED...



HE LEARNS THAT NEARLY ALL OF THE PANTHEONS HAD WITNESSED HIS BATTLE WITH THE CELESTIALS... AND WOULD SEE ASGARD RISE AGAIN FOR ITS SACRIFICE IN EARTH'S BEHALF...

FINALLY, THE NORSE GOD REACHES THE FINAL STOP ON HIS QUEST, THE PLACE CALLED NIRVANA, DWELLING PLACE OF THE HINDU GODS AND GODDESSES...



HAIL VISHNU, PEER OF MY FATHER.

TRIUNE GREETINGS TO YOU, NORTHERNER...

I SEE THAT ODIN HAS ACCOMPLISHED THE PLAN WE DEVISED A MILLENNIUM AGO. I AM PLEASED.

AYE, HE ACCOMPLISHED IT, AT THE COST OF HIS LIFE AND THOSE OF ALL MY PEOPLE. I NEED THY HELP IF I AM TO RESURRECT THEM.

AS THE PRESERVER-FORCE, ALL LIFE IS SACRED TO ME. I WOULD SEE YOUR KIND SURVIVE. HOWEVER, IT IS A TRINITY THAT RULES HERE, AND WE MUST HAVE A CONSENSUS BEFORE WE CAN ACT. **BRANNA?**

AS THE CREATOR-FORCE, I AM NOT CERTAIN IF IT IS APPROPRIATE TO REVIVE OLD ASGARD. IF WE LET IT DIE, WILL NOT A NEW ONE BE BORN OF ITS ASHES? IS NOT DEATH A PART OF THE CONTINUING CREATION, **SWIVA?**

YES, AND AS DESTROYER-FORCE, I WOULD SEE ASGARD PERISH. IT HAS FULFILLED ITS PURPOSE. WHY NOT LET NEW GODS HAVE ITS ENERGIES?



THOR STANDS SPEECHLESS... UNBELIEVING. AFTER ALL HIS TRIALS, THE LAST OF THE PANTHEONS DARES REFUSE THEIR AID?

I AM SORRY, ASGARDIAN. THE CONSENSUS IS THAT WE DO NOT GRANT YOU AID.

HOLD--IF THERE BE SOMETHING YE WANT IN RETURN, NAME IT AND--!

BARBARIAN? AYE--WARRIOR! I HAVE COME TOO FAR IN MY QUEST. IF YE WILL NOT GIVE UP A SLIVER OF YOUR POWER, I SHALL BATTLE YE FOR IT!



YOUR PROPOSITION INTERESTS ME, WHELP.

HAD YOU LEFT WHEN BIDDEN, I MIGHT HAVE SPARED YOU, BUT NOW YOU HAVE MOVED ME TO ACT. IF YOU WANT TO SEE YOUR FALLEN COMRADES AGAIN, SO BADLY, SEE THEM YOU SHALL--



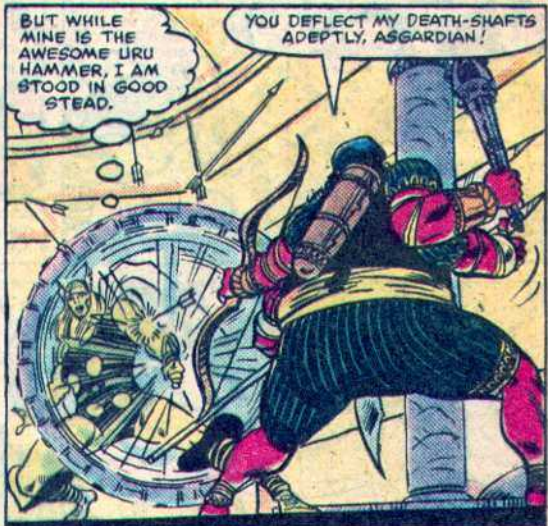


-- IN DEATH!

DO THY WORST, SHIVA-- I FEAR NEITHER DEATH NOR YOU!

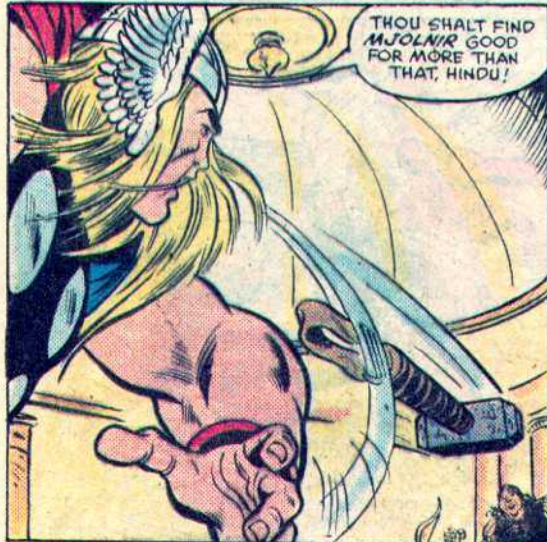


LININGH! DESPITE HIS GIRTH, HE IS MOST QUICK AND AGILE. AND WHILE I HAVE BUT ONE WEAPON, HE HAS FOUR!



BUT WHILE MINE IS THE AWESOME URU HAMMER, I AM STOOD IN GOOD STEAD.

YOU DEFLECT MY DEATH-SHAFTS ADEPTLY, ASGARDIAN!



THOU SHALT FIND MJOLNIR GOOD FOR MORE THAN THAT, HINDU!



PERHAPS YOUR WEAPON WOULD LIKE TO MAKE THE ACQUAINTANCE OF MINE.



'TIS BEYOND ALL BELIEVING! SHIVA DISPATCHED HIS WEAPONS SO QUICKLY THAT HIS CLUB HAS MET MJOLNIR IN FLIGHT!

--WHILE HIS SPEAR HAS SAILED PAST UNTHWARTED TO PIN ME 'GAINST YON PALACE WALL!



PERISH, YELLOWHAIR! PERISH IN THE EMBRACE OF MY LIGHTNING-SPEAR!

BY THE NORNS! I HAVE FORGOTTEN THAT MY MALLET NEED NO LONGER RETURN TO MY HAND! WITHOUT IT HOW CAN I BREAK FREE?

BUT WAIT--



--IT HATH RECOILED FROM ITS IMPACT WITH SHIVA'S CLUB WITH SUCH FORCE--

--THAT IT HURLS WITHIN MY REACH!

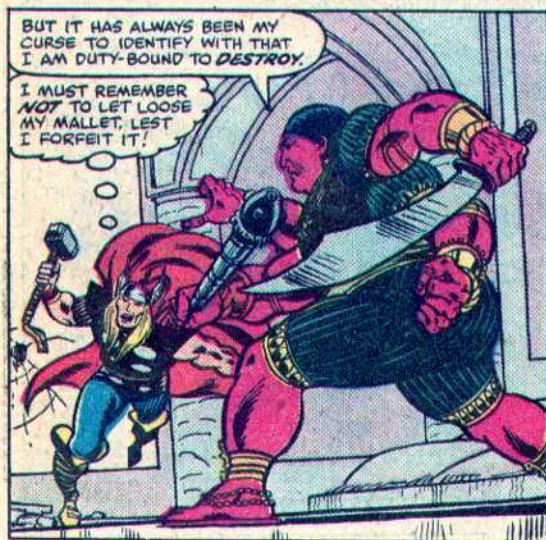


IT IS MINE!

NOW AS LORD OF THE LIVING LIGHTNING, I SHALL QUELL THIS RAGING DISCHARGE!



QUITE IMPRESSIVE, STORMGOD, I AM BEGINNING TO ADMIRE YOU EVER SO LITTLE.



BUT IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN MY CURSE TO IDENTIFY WITH THAT I AM DUTY-BOUND TO DESTROY.

I MUST REMEMBER NOT TO LET LOOSE MY MALLET, LEST I FORFEIT IT!



'TIS DONE.

HE IS CAUGHT-OFF BALANCE WITH THE SUDDENNESS OF MY ATTACK!



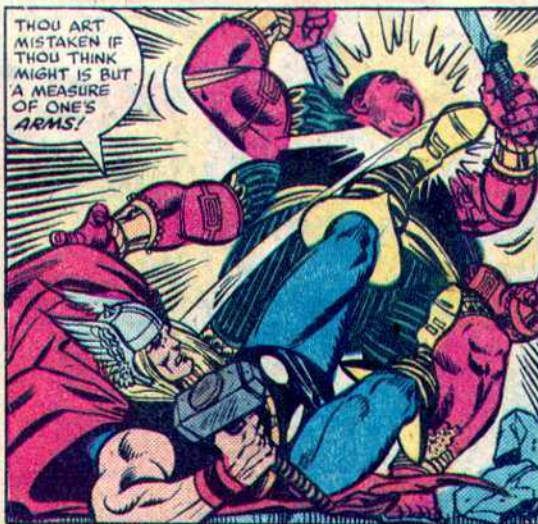
UHHH... HE HAS RECOVERED FROM THE COLLISION AS QUICKLY AS I!

I AM SURPRISED YOU HAVE NOT YET ABANDONED HOPE, THOR--

-- HAVE YOU NOT REALIZED THAT YOUR TWO ARMS ARE NO MATCH FOR MY FOUR?



SEE HOW QUICKLY I AM ABLE TO GAIN THE UPPER HAND?



THOU ART MISTAKEN IF THOU THINK MIGHT IS BUT A MEASURE OF ONE'S ARMS!



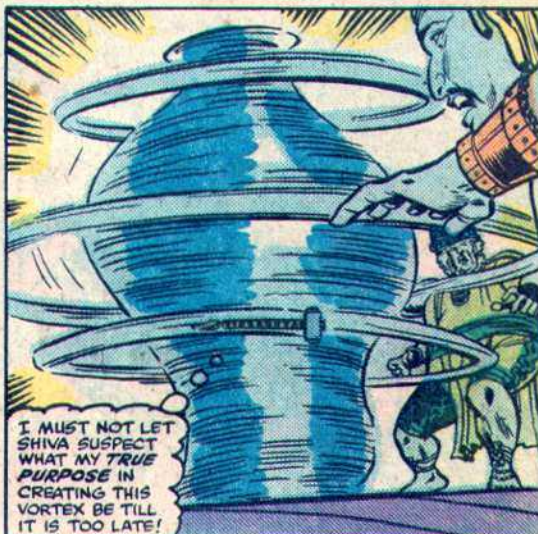
HE STAGGERS BUT YET STANDS. WHAT DOETH IT TAKE TO DEFEAT THIS GOD?

AGAIN YOU HAVE GIVEN ME REASON TO RESPECT YOUR BATTLE PROWESS--



-- BUT YOU FIGHT A HOPELESS BATTLE. FOR I AM AN ASCENDANT GOD, WHILE YOU ARE A GOD PAST HIS HEYDAY!

RAVE ON, MADGOD. I SHALL TRY TO MATCH THE WIND OF YOUR WORDS WITH THAT OF MY HAMMER.



I MUST NOT LET SHIVA SUSPECT WHAT MY TRUE PURPOSE IN CREATING THIS VORTEX BE TILL IT IS TOO LATE!

YOU SEEK TO DISORIENT ME WITH A MERE TEMPEST, EH, STORM-BRINGER? *SAN!* IT IS TIME TO DISPEL WITH SUCH NONSENSE. IT IS TIME YOU FELT THE *FIERY GLARE* OF MY *THIRD EYE*.

I HAVE PARALYZED YOU--

--AND NOW YOU ARE A *SLAVE* TO MY WILL. I COMMAND YOU TO CEASE THIS FUTURE WINDSTORM AND PREPARE FOR YOUR *DESTRUCTION*.

AH, YOUR WEAPON SLOWS IN ITS SPIRAL PATH. NOW I-- WHAT'S THIS?

YOUR HAMMER HAS SPIRITED ME FROM *NIRVANA!*

HE AVERTED HIS GAZE, FREEING ME!

THOU ART NOW ON THE *SIFROST BRIDGE* ENTRANCE TO MY HOMELAND OF *ASGARD!*

SO YOU THINK TO *OUTWIT* ME SINCE YOU CAN'T *OUT-FIGHT* ME!

NAY VARLET, I SHALL DO BOTH.

I REALIZED THAT ON THY OWN GROUND, THOU MIGHT BE INVINCIBLE--

--BUT HERE, *THOR STANDS SUPREME!*

QUINFF!

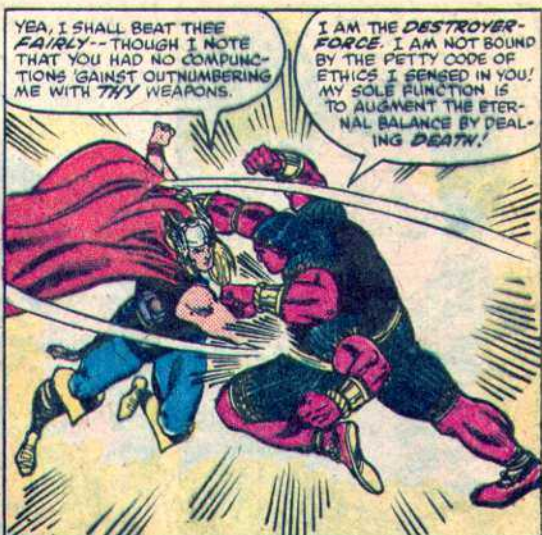
THUS DO I RIP THEE OF THY REMAINING WEAPONS--

--AND SO SHALL I *VANQUISH* THEE!



THIS IS HOW YOU WOULD HAVE VICTORY-- BY **BLUDGEONING** A WEAPONLESS ENEMY?

NO, I SHALL SHEATHE MY WEAPON AND FIGHT THEE HAND TO HAND!



YEA, I SHALL BEAT THEE FAIRLY-- THOUGH I NOTE THAT YOU HAD NO COMPUNCTIONS GAINST OUTNUMBERING ME WITH **THY** WEAPONS.

I AM THE **DESTROYER-FORCE**. I AM NOT BOUND BY THE PETTY CODE OF ETHICS I SENGED IN YOU! MY SOLE FUNCTION IS TO AUGMENT THE ETERNAL BALANCE BY **DEALING DEATH!**



I AM **THE AVENGER**-- THE SOLE HOPE FOR MY PEOPLE'S REDEMPTION. I AM EMPOWERED BY THE MEMORY OF MY GLORIOUS RACE!

'GAINST MY RIGHTEOUS WRATH, NOT E'EN ALL THE **DEATH-GODS** IN ETERNITY SHALL PREVAIL!



NOW, **DESTROYER-FORCE**-- I SHALL ASK THEE BUT **ONCE MORE**--



-- WILT THOU GIVE TO ME THE **LIFE-FORCE** I REQUIRE--

-- OR WILL I BE FORCED TO TOSS THEE INTO THE **YAWNING VOID** BETWEEN WORLDS...

... THERE TO DRIFT TILL OBLIVION TAKES THEE?

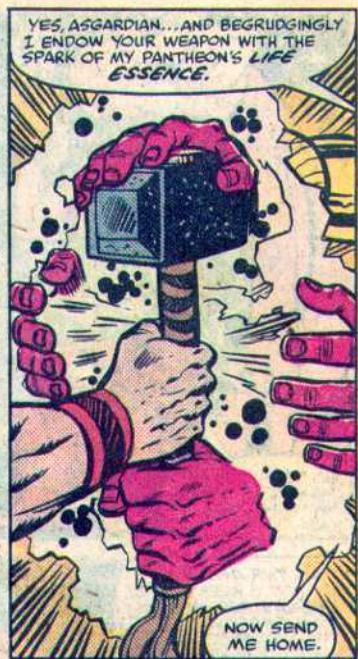


YOU WIN, TWO-ARMS--
PUT ME DOWN!



IT WOULD SEEM
THAT YOUR
PASSION FOR
LIFE IS GREATER
THAN MY PASSION
FOR DESTRUCTION
THIS DAY. SOME-
DAY THIS WILL
NOT BE SO.

ART THOU
EMPOWERED
TO GIVE
ENERGY ON
THY RACE'S
BEHALF?



YES, ASGARDIAN...AND BEGRUDGINGLY
I ENDOW YOUR WEAPON WITH THE
SPARK OF MY PANTHEON'S LIFE
ESSENCE.

NOW SEND
ME HOME.



AGREED. GO THEN AND THANK THY
PEOPLE FOR THIS GIFT. AND THOUGH
I DO NOT COMPREHEND THE OBSESSION
THAT MOVES YOU, I DO RESPECT YOU
AS AN ABLE FOEMAN!

YOU HAVE WON THIS
TIME, STORAGOD. FOR
I UNDERESTIMATED
YOU.

BUT KNOW YOU
THIS: YOU HAVE MADE
A POWERFUL ENEMY
THIS DAY, AND WHEN
NEXT WE CLASH,
VICTORY SHALL
GO TO SHIVA!



THIS IS A MATTER
FOR ANOTHER
TIME. NOW I
MUST DELIVER
THE POWER OF
THE PANTHEONS
TO HIM WHO IS
THE HEART
AND SOUL OF
ASGARD--



REVERENTLY, THOR APPROACHES THE
THRONE WHERE ALL-FATHER ODIN SITS
STIFFLY LIFELESSLY. LADY SIF AND
QUEEN FRIGGA AT HIS FEET...



I PRAY
THAT THIS
SUCCEEDS.

WITH A SURGE OF SNEER DETERMINATION THOR COMMANDS HIS MIGHTY MALLET TO UNLEASH ITS PENT-UP POWER AT THE IMMOBILE FIGURE OF HIS FATHER BEFORE HIM.

AND WHEN THE HAMMER'S RECENTLY-ACQUIRED ENERGIES ARE EXHAUSTED...

...NOTHING HAS CHANGED.

I HAVE FAILED! THE LIFE FORCE OF THE OTHER GODS WAS NOT ENOUGH! MOTHER EARTH WARNED THAT MY CHANCE OF SUCCESS WAS SLIM, BUT I REFUSED TO ACCEPT IT. O ASSGARD... ODIN... I HAVE LOST THEE!

THEN... WEEP NO MORE, MY SON. I AM RISEN.

STAND THEE BACK-- I HAVE A SACRED TASK TO PERFORM.

F-FATHER?

FROM THE GAUNTLETED HAND OF THE ALL-FATHER FLOWS THE LIVING ENERGY OF ALL GODS...

...AND AS ODIN ONCE BESTOWED LIFE UPON THESE GODS OVER TWO THOUSAND YEARS AGO, SO DOES HE AGAIN THIS DAY.

AND AS ALL ASGARD STIRS FROM ITS DEATH-LIKE SLUMBER...

NOW COME TO ME, MY SON-- LET ME FEEL THY STRONG EMBRACE.

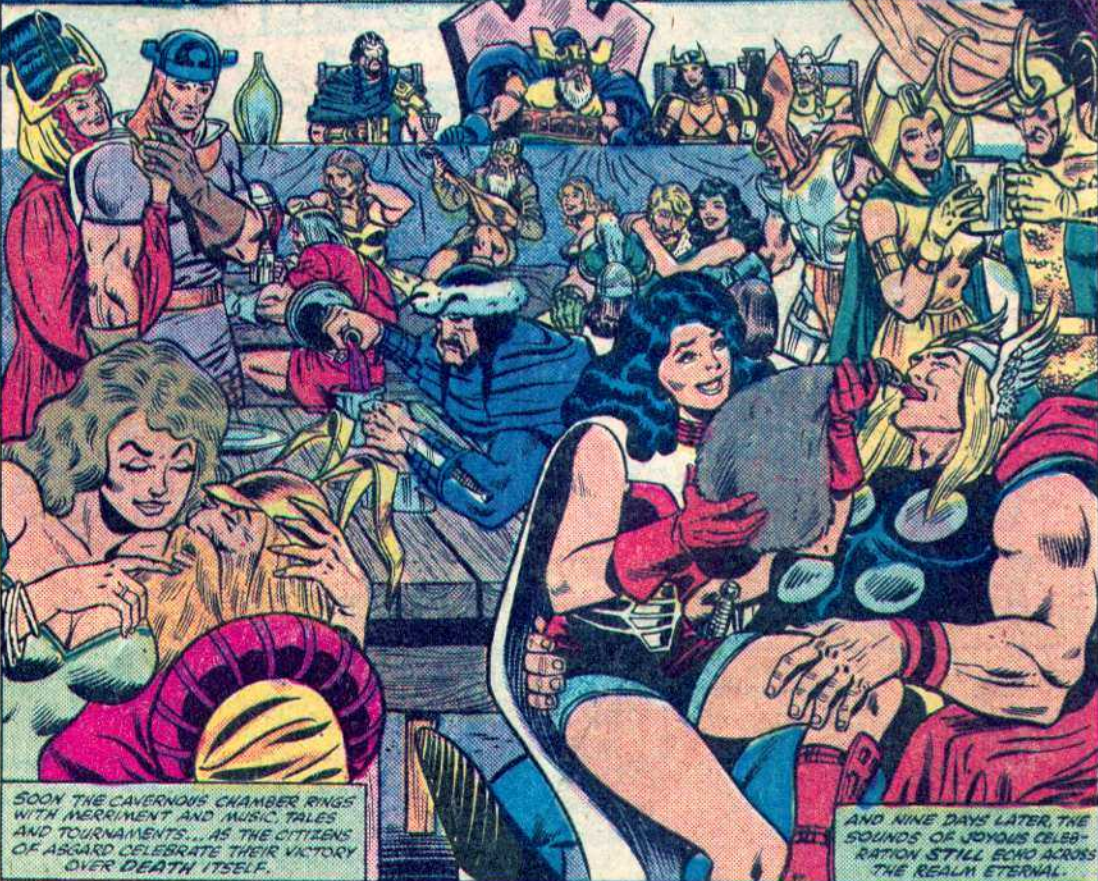
MY FATHER, IT IS GOOD TO SEE THEE ALIVE!

AYE, THANKS TO THEE, THOU HAST SAVED US ALL THIS DAY, NE'ER HAS A SON MADE A FATHER MORE PROUD.

I-- I WISH TO APOLOGIZE, MILORD, FOR E'ER DOUBTING YOUR LOVE FOR ME OR FOR EARTH. I KNOW NOW--

HUSH, THOR, THERE WILL BE TIME FOR TALK LATER, NOW 'TIS TIME TO REJOICE-- AYE, NOW REJOICE, FOR RAGNAROK HAS COME AND GONE AND WE ALL HAVE LIVED TO TELL OF IT.

THUS THE PROCLAMATION GOES FORTH THROUGH-OUT THE LAND INVITING ALL THE GODS AND HEROES OF ASGARD TO GATHER IN COIN'S GREAT DINING HALL...



SOON THE CAVERNOUS CHAMBER RINGS WITH MERRIMENT AND MUSIC, TALES AND TOURNAMENTS... AS THE CITIZENS OF ASGARD CELEBRATE THEIR VICTORY OVER DEATH ITSELF.

AND NINE DAYS LATER, THE SOUNDS OF JOYOUS CELEBRATION STILL ECHO ACROSS THE REALM ETERNAL.