



THE
MIGHTY

THOR

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE



MARVEL
COMICS
GROUP

126
MAR

WHOM THE
GODS WOULD
DESTROY!

12¢

NO.



THE MIGHTY THOR!

"WHOM THE GODS WOULD DESTROY!"

NOT EVEN *HERCULES*, SON OF *ZEUS*, MAY STRIKE *THOR* WITH IMPUNITY!

ANOTHER MIGHTY MARVEL INSTANT RESUME:

HERCULES HAS COME TO EARTH! HE'S GOT THE BIG EYE FOR *THOR*'S CHICK!

GOLDBLOCKS IS BUGGED, BUT *GOOD*!

SO, THEY'RE FIGHTING IT OUT!

THERE! THAT'S AS PAINLESS AS WE CAN MAKE IT!

FEATURING: THE LONG-AWAITED CLASH OF TITANS BETWEEN MIGHTY *THOR* and *HERCULES*!

YOUR OVERBEARING CONCEIT IS A STANDING JOKE IN *OLYMPUS*, THUNDER GOD! BUT NOW I'LL RID YOU OF IT—FOREVER!

THEY SAID IT COULDN'T BE DONE! AND HERE ARE THE GUYS WHO ALMOST COULDN'T DO IT--

STAN LEE
THE LITERARY LION!

JACK KIRBY
THE PENCILLING PUSSYCAT!

V. COLLETTA
THE DELINEATING DRAGON!

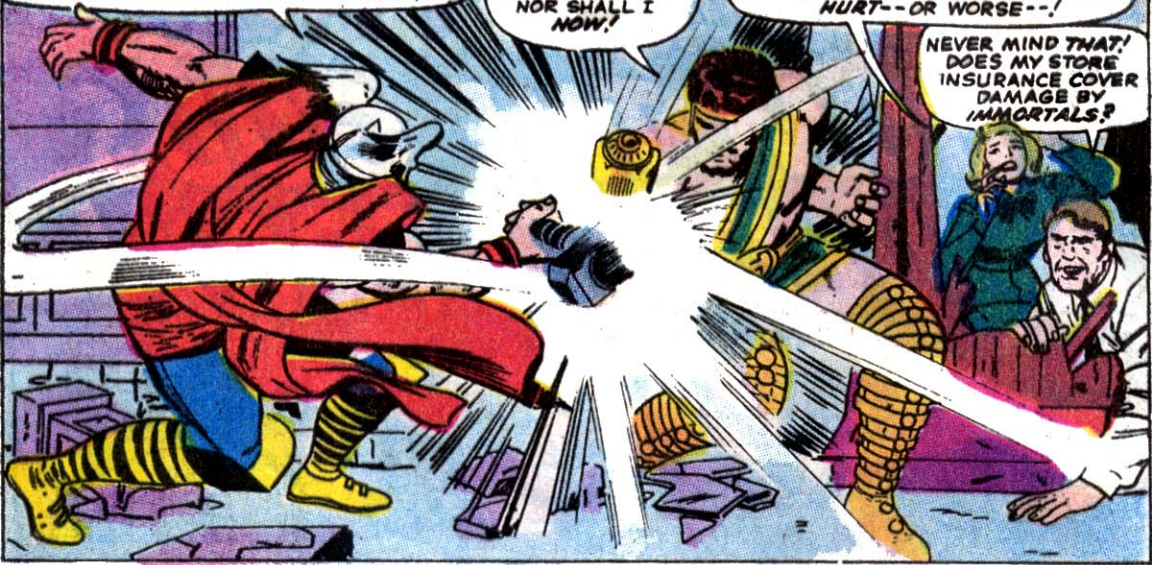
ARTIE SIMEK
THE LETTERING LOOKS IT!

MY HAMMER AGAINST YOUR MACE!
WE SHALL SEE WHICH IS THE STRONGER!

I'VE NEVER YET
TASTED DEFEAT--
NOR SHALL I
NOW!

NO! THEY MUSTN'T FIGHT OVER ME!
IF--IF ONE OF THEM SHOULD BE
HURT--OR WORSE--!

NEVER MIND THAT!
DOES MY STORE
INSURANCE COVER
DAMAGE BY
IMMORTALS?

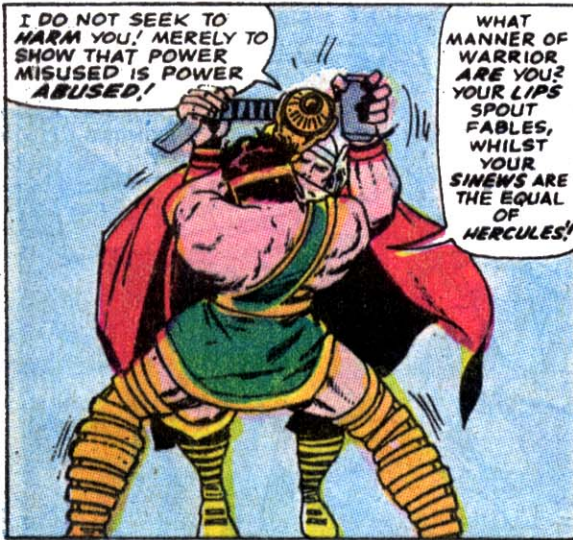


I DO NOT SEEK TO
HARM YOU, MERELY TO
SHOW THAT POWER
MISUSED IS POWER
ABUSED!

WHAT
MANNER OF
WARRIOR
ARE YOU?
YOUR LIPS
SPOUT
FABLES,
WHILST
YOUR
SINAWS ARE
THE EQUAL
OF
HERCULES!

NAY, RASH ONE! THE
POWER OF THOR IS
EQUAL TO NONE! MY
STRENGTH IS SUPREME!

AGAIN YOUR COLOSSAL
EGOTISM FILLS MY
SOUL WITH RAGE!



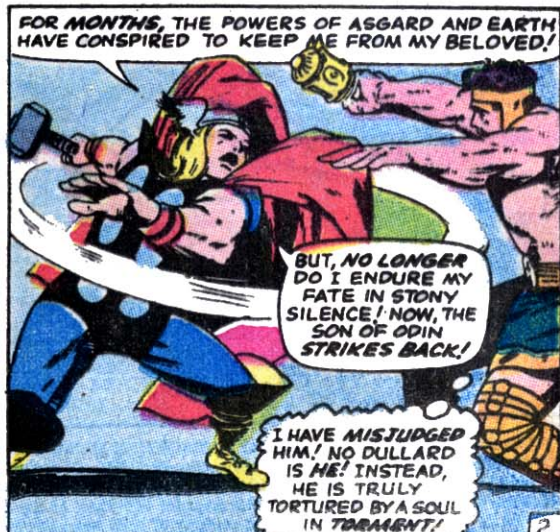
THE MORTAL
FEMALE FAVOR
WHOSE FAVOR
WE BATTLE
DESERVES BETTER
THAN SUCH A VAIN,
HUMORLESS
DULLARD AS THEE!

DIM-WITTED CLOD!
IF I BE HUMORLESS,
IT IS NOT WITHOUT
GOOD REASON!

FOR MONTHS, THE POWERS OF ASGARD AND EARTH
HAVE CONSPIRED TO KEEP ME FROM MY BELOVED!

BUT, NO LONGER
DO I ENDURE MY
FATE IN STONY
SILENCE! NOW, THE
SON OF ODIN
STRIKES BACK!

I HAVE MISJUDGED
HIM! NO DULLARD
IS HE! INSTEAD,
HE IS TRULY
TORTURED BY A SOUL
IN TORMENT!



MEANWHILE, ON THE FABLED RAINBOW BRIDGE WHICH SPANS THE INFINITE VOID BETWEEN EARTH AND ASGARD, A SOLITARY FIGURE SLOWLY RISES...



TRULY MUST THE MADNESS BE UPON THE GOD OF THUNDER!

HE HATH USED HIS AWESOME POWER TO OVERCOME HEIMDALL, GUARDIAN OF THE BRIDGE! SURELY, HE MUST KNOW THE DREAD PRICE WHICH A VENGEFUL ODIN WILL FORCE HIM TO PAY!

AND, THROUGHT THE GOLDEN REALM, AS THE WARRIORS OF ASGARD RECOVER FROM THE INDESCRIBABLE ONSLAUGHT OF MIGHTY THOR, ALL SEEM TO SHARE THE SAME SOLEMN THOUGHT...



WHAT PUNISHMENT WILL THOR RECEIVE AT THE HANDS OF REGAL ODIN?

IT CHILLS ME TO THE MARROW WHEN I THINK UPON IT!

IT CHILLS THE HEART OF THE THUNDER GOD'S CLOSEST FRIEND, AS WELL--AS BALDER THE BRAVE ATTEMPTS TO SOFTEN THE CATAclysmic WRATH OF HIS LIEGE...

HARK YOU, SIRE! THY SON WAS MOTIVATED BY LOVE OF A FEMALE--IS HE NOT MORE DESERVING OF PITY THAN RETRIBUTION?

LET THY VOICE BE STILL, LOYAL BALDER! I BE NOT MOVED!

I RESPECT THY DEVOTION--BUT MY LAW IS THE LAW SUPREME--AND NONE MAY BREAK IT!

MINE EARS SHALL HEAR NO MORE ENTREATIES! NOR SHALL THE VOICE OF ODIN MOUTH WORDS OF FORGIVENESS!



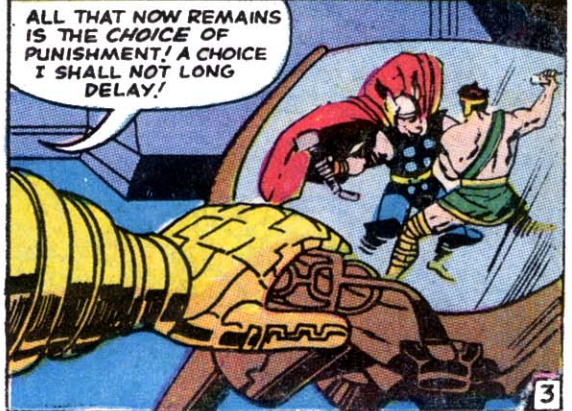
THOR HAS DARED TO PIT HIS WILL AGAINST MINE! FOR THAT, HE MUST PAY!

AND, BY THE TOWERING SPIRES OF ASGARD, HOW HE SHALL PAY!



THEN, TURNING DARKLY TO THE COSMIC CRYSTAL FROM WHICH NOTHING ON EARTH CAN BE HIDDEN, THE LORD OF ASGARD MUTTERS SOFTLY...

ALL THAT NOW REMAINS IS THE CHOICE OF PUNISHMENT! A CHOICE I SHALL NOT LONG DELAY!



BUT, IN THE MORTAL WORLD BELOW, THOR CONTINUES HIS THUNDEROUS ONSLAUGHT--UNAWARE OF THE DIRE FATE WHICH AWAITS HIM--!

HIS ENCHANTED HAMMER MAKES A LIVING MOCKERY OF MINE OWN MACE-- EVEN AS THE POWER OF HIS LIMBS IS EASILY THE EQUAL OF MINE OWN!

BACK, THOU BLUSTERING BRAGGART! WELL MAY THOU THANK WHATEVER GODS THOU PRAYEST TO THAT I HURL MY HAMMER NOT TO DESTROY, BUT TO HUMBLE THEE!

LET NO MORTAL FEEL THE PANGS OF FEAR! ONLY HERCULES IS TARGET FOR MY URU MALLET! ALL OTHERS SHALL BE UNSCATHED!

HIS HAMMER RETURNED TO HIM-- PASSING OVER THE HEADS OF THE MORTAL ASSEMBLAGE!

BE THOU WARNED, SCION OF ASGARD! NOW THAT THE FULL MEASURE OF THY STRENGTH IS REVEALED, I HUNGER FOR MORE BATTLE!

FOR NOTHING PLEASES THE HEART OF HERCULES SO MUCH AS A FOE WHO CAN OFFER A CHALLENGE TO MY MATCHLESS POWER!

HE IS AS THOR HAD BEEN, IN THE HALCYON DAYS OF YORE, HE THRIVES ON COMBAT AS THE BLOSSOMS THRIVE ON RAIN!

BUT I AM TOO HEAVILY-LADEN WITH CARE TO TREAT THIS ENCOUNTER AS A LARK! IT MUST BE ENDED--AND SOON!

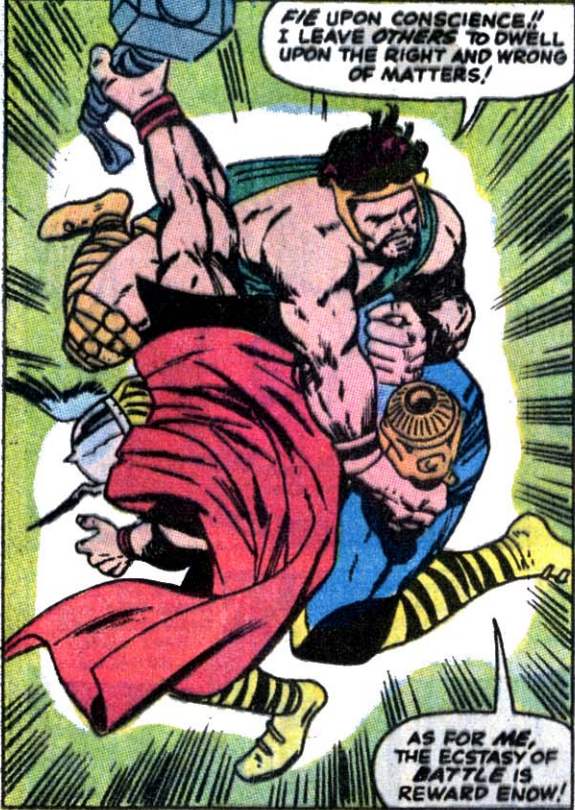
SSKKKRUNTCH!

HAA! HOW PUNY ARE THE PRODUCTS OF MERE MORTALS!! HOW THEY SHATTER AND CRUMBLE BEFORE THE MIGHT OF HERCULES!

STRENGTH ALONE IS A HOLLOW VIRTUE, SON OF ZEUS!

WITHOUT CONSCIENCE, WITHOUT RESPECT FOR THOSE WHO MAY BE WEAKER THAN THEE-- THY POWER RESTS ONLY ON PILLARS OF SAND!

SUDDENLY, THE UNPREDICTABLE GREEK IMMORTAL HURLS HIMSELF FROM THE WRECKED VEHICLES LEAPING AT HIS CAPED FOE WITH THE FORCE OF A JUGGERNAUT--!



FIE UPON CONSCIENCE!! I LEAVE OTHERS TO DWELL UPON THE RIGHT AND WRONG OF MATTERS!

AS FOR ME, THE ECSTASY OF BATTLE IS REWARD ENOW!

I HAVE WARNED THEE FOR THE FINAL TIME! TILL NOW, I HAVE STAYED MINE ARM FROM UNLEASHING A FATAL BLOW -- BUT YOU LEAVE ME NO CHOICE--!

DO THEN THY WORST, THUNDER GOD! NO GROUNDLESS THREAT SHALL PUT HERCULES TO ROUTE!



BY THE MAJESTY OF MIGHTY OLYMPUS!! NEVER BEFORE HAS ANY BEING BROKEN THE GRIP OF HERCULES TO ESCAPE MY MOST POTENT BLOW!



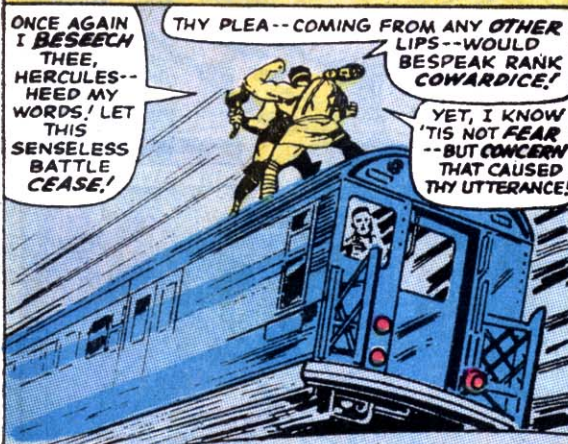
EVEN ON THY BACK, THOU ART A FOE TO BE FEARED! BUT, MY MACE SHALL GIVE THEE PAUSE!

THOR IS NOT IMPRESSED! THY WORDS DO LITTLE MORE THAN BOLSTER THINE OWN FALTERING CONFIDENCE!

ONCE MORE, THE MATCHLESS POWER OF THE THUNDER GOD ENABLES HIM TO ROLL CLEAR OF HERCULES' CYCLONIC BLOW, AS THE IMMORTAL'S MACE SHATTERS THE VERY GROUND BENEATH THEM, CAUSING THE TWO TITANIC COMBATANTS TO PLUNGE ATOP A SPEEDING TRAIN IN THE SUBWAY TUNNEL BELOW...



OBVIOUSLY TO ALL AROUND THEM, THE TWO RAMPAGING GOLIATHS FIGHT ON, AS THE SPEEDING STEEL CAR BENEATH THEIR FEET ROARS TOWARDS ITS NEXT STOP--AN ELEVATED OPEN-AIR STATION--!



ONCE AGAIN I BESEECH THEE, HERCULES--HEED MY WORDS! LET THIS SENSELESS BATTLE CEASE!

THY PLEA--COMING FROM ANY OTHER LIPS--WOULD BESPEAK RANK COWARDICE!

YET, I KNOW 'TIS NOT FEAR--BUT CONCERN THAT CAUSED THY UTTERANCE!

BUT THE VERY PRIDE OF HERCULES IS AT STAKE! THE VICTORY MUST BE MINE ERE MY ARM WILL BE STILLED!

SO BE IT! UPON THINE OWN HEAD THEN SHALL BE THAT WHICH BEFALLS!



THAT NOISE! THAT POUNDING! WHAT'S HAPPENING UP THERE!

WE'VE REACHED THE STATION! EVERYONE OUT--QUICKLY!

WE CAN END THIS AT ONCE, GOD OF THUNDER! MERELY MOUTH THE WORDS--I YIELD TO THEE!



MAY I NE'ER GAZE UPON VALHALLA ERE SUCH WORDS ESCAPE THE LIPS OF THOR!

THE SUBWAYS WERE BAD ENOUGH TILL NOW--BUT THIS IS RIDICULOUS!

ONE FINAL BLOW--WITH ALL MY STRENGTH--WOULD SURELY END THIS USELESS AFFAIR!



AND YET, I CANNOT BRING MYSELF TO DEAL SO HARSHLY WITH THE SON OF ZEUS!

CRASH!



I AM TRULY CERTAIN THAT HERCULES IS HEADSTRONG RATHER THAN EVIL-- LIKE A SMALL CHILD WHO HAS BEEN UNDISCIPLINED SINCE BIRTH!

SURELY THE LUST FOR BATTLE HAS FADED FROM THEE BY NOW, OLYMPIAN!

NAY, THUNDER GOD! MORE THAN EVER DO I LONG TO RAISE MY MACE IN TRIUMPH!



NOW, HERE-- ON THIS SITE WHERE AGED BUILDINGS ARE BEING DEMOLISHED. WE CAN REACH OUR ULTIMATE MOMENT OF TRUTH-- WITH NONE TO INTERFERE!

YOUR HUNGER FOR BATTLE IS A DISEASE --AND THE HAMMER OF THOR SHALL SUPPLY THY CURE!

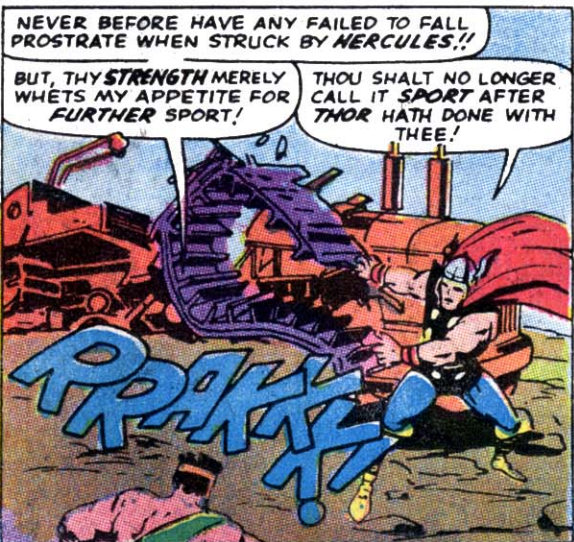


NOT WHILST HERCULES CAN HURL THE FIRST BLOW! LET THIS TEACH THEE CAUTION, ASSGARDIAN!

THOKE!

VERILY, THOU ART BEYOND ALL REASON! THUS, IF ONLY FORCE SHALL PREVAIL--!

FORCE THEN SHALL IT BE THAT BRINGS THEE TO THY KNEES!



NEVER BEFORE HAVE ANY FAILED TO FALL PROSTRATE WHEN STRUCK BY HERCULES!!

BUT, THY STRENGTH MERELY WHETS MY APPETITE FOR FURTHER SPORT!

THOU SHALT NO LONGER CALL IT SPORT AFTER THOR HATH DONE WITH THEE!

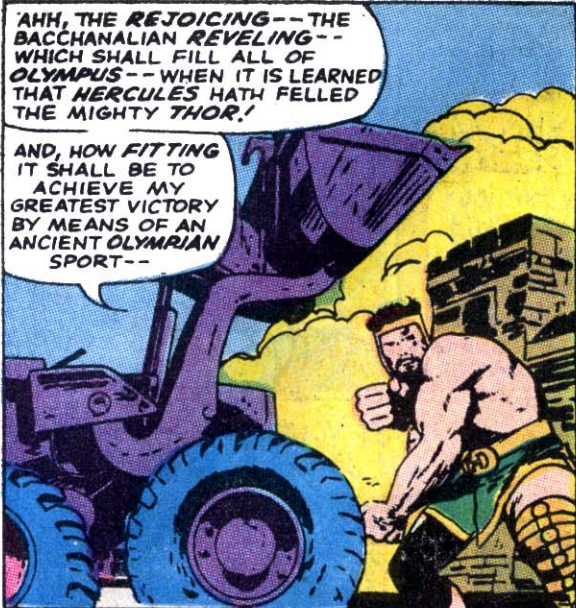
PRATK!



THWPPP!

HAH! USING THE STEEL TREAD OF A VEHICLE AS A WHIP AGAINST HERCULES!! A BRILLIANT STRATAGEM, THUNDER GOD--!

A PITY IT IS DOOMED TO FAILURE!

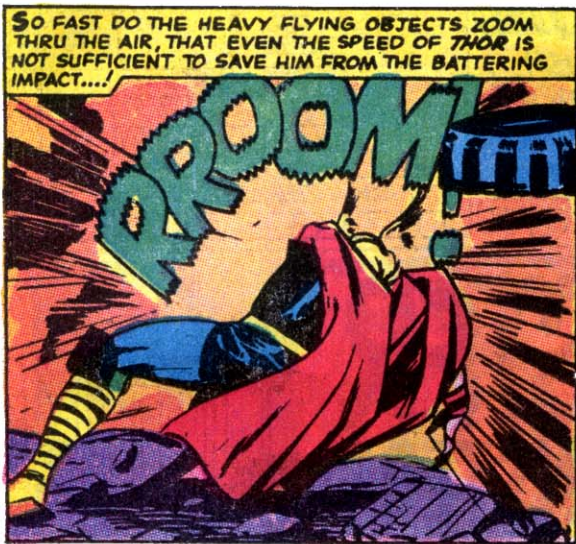


AHH, THE REJOICING-- THE BACCHANALIAN REVELING-- WHICH SHALL FILL ALL OF OLYMPUS-- WHEN IT IS LEARNED THAT HERCULES HATH FELLED THE MIGHTY THOR!

AND, HOW FITTING IT SHALL BE TO ACHIEVE MY GREATEST VICTORY BY MEANS OF AN ANCIENT OLYMPIAN SPORT--



MAYHAP EVEN THOU HAST HEARD OF THE GRECIAN PROWESS AT THROWING THE DISCUS!!

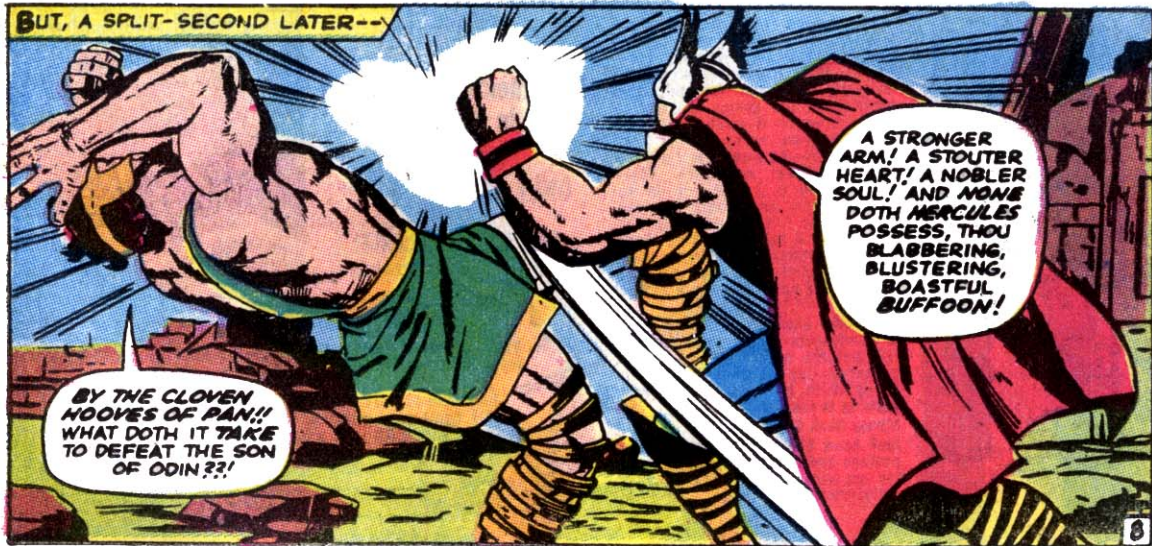


SO FAST DO THE HEAVY FLYING OBJECTS ZOOM THRU THE AIR, THAT EVEN THE SPEED OF THOR IS NOT SUFFICIENT TO SAVE HIM FROM THE BATTERING IMPACT...!



AND NOW, WHILST THOU ART STILL IN STATE OF SHOCK--

THE FINAL BLOW SHALL BE STRUCK-- AS ONLY THE FABLED FIST OF HERCULES CAN STRIKE IT!



BUT, A SPLIT-SECOND LATER--

BY THE CLOVEN HOOVES OF PAN!! WHAT DOTH IT TAKE TO DEFEAT THE SON OF ODIN??!

A STRONGER ARM! A STOUTER HEART! A NOBLER SOUL! AND NONE DOTH HERCULES POSSESS, THOU BLABBERING, BLUSTERING, BOASTFUL BUFFOON!

**WONDER BEYOND
WONDERS!! THOU
DOEST HAVE FIRE
IN THY VEINS--AS
WELL AS THUNDER
IN THY FISTS! YEA,
TIS NOT SOME MEALY-
MOUTHED CABBAGE
I DO BATTLE WITH!
THOU ART AS
CAPABLE OF ANGER
AS HERCULES
HIMSELF!**

**ANGER??! BY THE
BRISTLING BEARD OF
ODIN; THOU KNOWEST NOT
THE MEANING OF THE
WORD! NOT ALL THE FURY
IN THE HEAVENS--NOT
ALL THE SAVAGERY ON
EARTH--CAN EQUAL THE
SENSES--SHATTERING
CYCLONE OF RAGE WHICH
IS THOR, WHEN SEIZED
BY A POUNDING PAROXYSM
OF WRATH!**

BUT, EVEN AS THE BATTLE RAGES, WE MUST ONCE AGAIN TURN TO HALLOWED ASGARD. FOR IT IS HERE THAT EVENTS ARE BEING SHAPED WHICH WILL HAVE THE MOST PROFOUND EFFECT UPON THE THUNDER GOD BELOW---

BEHOLD, SEIDRING! MY SON DOTH BATTLE LIKE A WARRIOR BORN!

THE PROMESS OF THOR HAS LONG BEEN COMMON KNOWLEDGE, SIRE!

BUT, THOUGH HE BE THE BRAVEST OF ALL WHO LIVE--THOUGH HE BE FLESH OF THY FLESH--HE HATH BROKEN THY LAW--AND MUST BE BROUGHT TO TASK!



WHEN'E'R WE SPEAK, I FIND NEW JUSTIFICATION FOR THOSE WHO CALL THEE SEIDRING, THE MERCILESS!

YET, THOU RANKEST THE HIGHEST OF ALL MY COUNCIL--AND THY WORDS, THOUGH PAINFUL TO MINE HEART, HAVE THE RING OF TRUTH TO THEM!

THY SORROW IS SEIDRING'S SORROW, SIRE! BUT, JUSTICE IS JUSTICE!

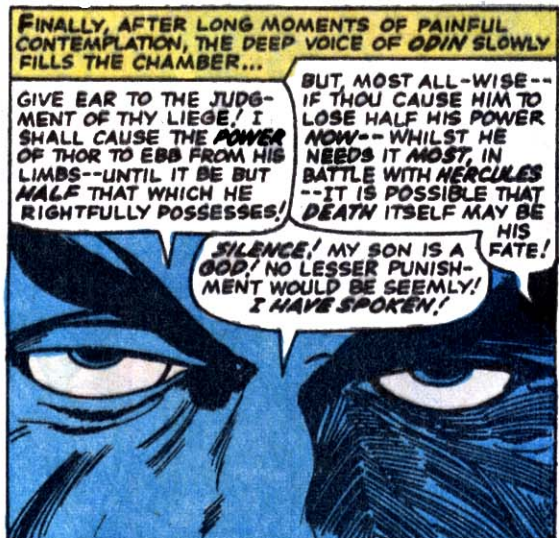


FINALLY, AFTER LONG MOMENTS OF PAINFUL CONTEMPLATION, THE DEEP VOICE OF ODIN SLOWLY FILLS THE CHAMBER...

GIVE EAR TO THE JUDGMENT OF THY LIEGE! I SHALL CAUSE THE POWER OF THOR TO EBB FROM HIS LIMBS--UNTIL IT BE BUT HALF THAT WHICH HE RIGHTFULLY POSSESSES!

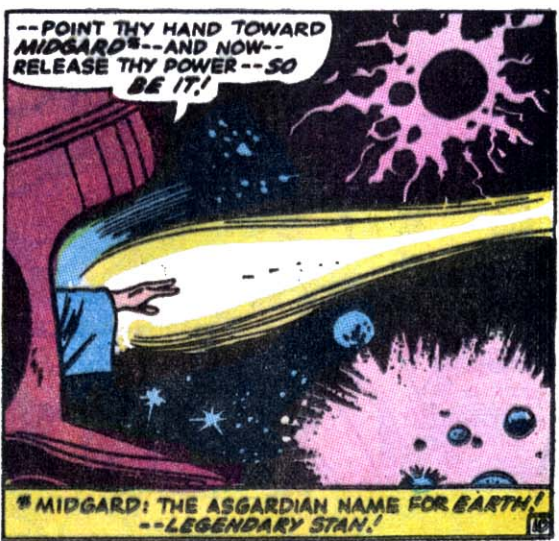
BUT, MOST ALL-WISE-- IF THOU CAUSE HIM TO LOSE HALF HIS POWER NOW--WHILST HE NEEDS IT MOST, IN BATTLE WITH HERCULES--IT IS POSSIBLE THAT DEATH ITSELF MAY BE HIS FATE!

SILENCE! MY SON IS A GOD! NO LESSER PUNISHMENT WOULD BE SEEMLY! I HAVE SPOKEN!



--POINT THY HAND TOWARD MIDGARD*--AND NOW-- RELEASE THY POWER--SO BE IT!

BUT, STILL AM I HIS FATHER; I CANNOT BRING MYSELF TO PLACE BLOOD OF MY BLOOD IN THE PATH OF DOOM! I GIVE THE ODIN-POWER TO THEE, SEIDRING--



***MIDGARD! THE ASGARDIAN NAME FOR EARTH! --LEGENDARY STAN!**

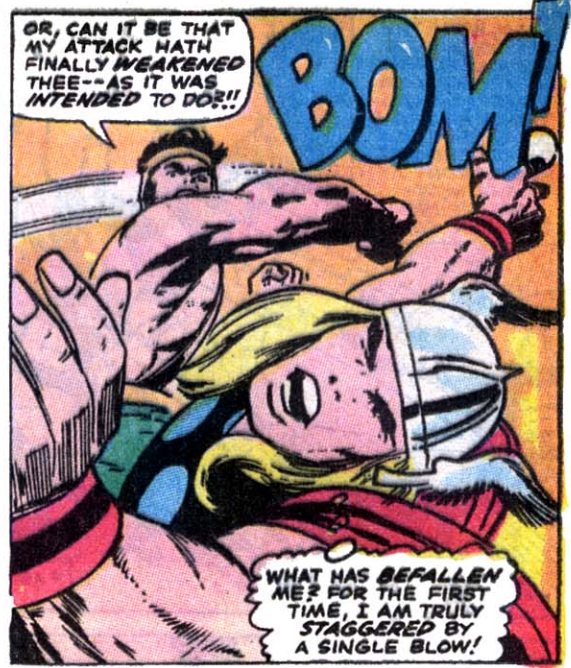


AND, AT THAT VERY INSTANT, AN UNIMAGINABLE DISTANCE AWAY--!

WHAT IS THIS?

THOU, WHO HAST ENDURED MY MIGHTIEST BLOWS-- INJURED BY A MERE BOLT OF LIGHT??!

UNNNNN--!



OR, CAN IT BE THAT MY ATTACK HATH FINALLY WEAKENED THEE--AS IT WAS INTENDED TO DO?!!

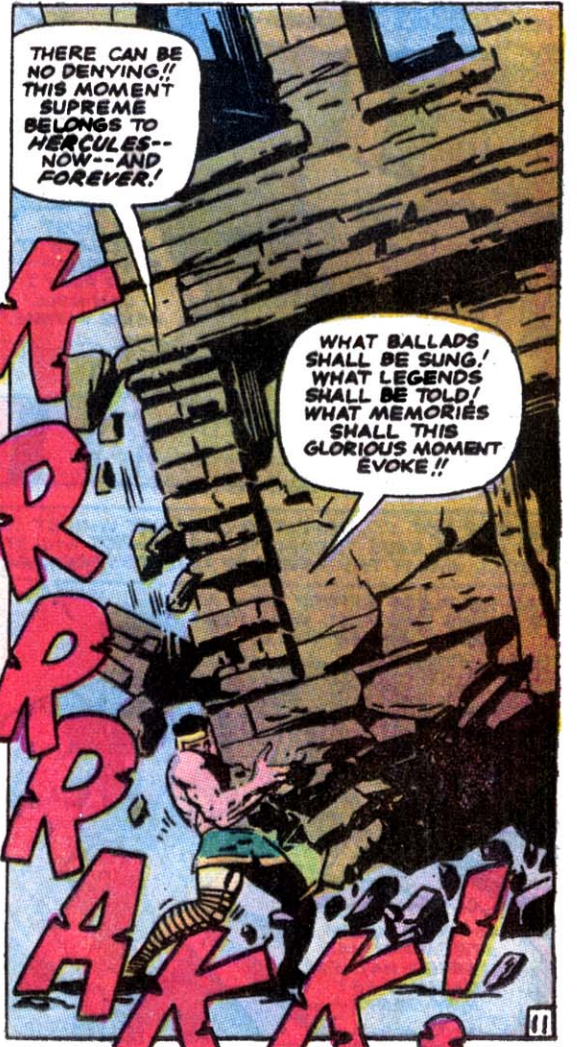
BOM!

WHAT HAS BEFALLEN ME? FOR THE FIRST TIME, I AM TRULY STAGGERED BY A SINGLE BLOW!



HAN! THOUGH THE THUNDER GOD'S STRENGTH IS WANING AT LAST, THE POWER OF HERCULES IS AS TITANIC AS BEFORE. THEREFORE, I SHALL NOW PROVE 'TIS HERCULES WHO IS MIGHTIEST OF ALL-- IN A MANNER THAT BEFITS SO MONUMENTAL AN OCCASION--!

SO LONG AS THE MEMORY OF MANKIND ENDURES, THIS SHALL BE ACCLAIMED AS THE GREATEST SINGLE FEAT IN RECORDED HISTORY!



THERE CAN BE NO DENYING!! THIS MOMENT SUPREME BELONGS TO HERCULES-- NOW--AND FOREVER.!

WHAT BALLADS SHALL BE SUNG! WHAT LEGENDS SHALL BE TOLD! WHAT MEMORIES SHALL THIS GLORIOUS MOMENT EVOKE!!

KRRRAK!

THEN, WITH THE EASE OF A MAN CASUALLY FLIPPING A CHEWING-GUM WRAPPER AWAY, THE TITAN FROM OLYMPUS HURLS THE GUTTED BRICK HOUSEFRONT AT THE NOW-WEAKENED THUNDER GOD--!

WHROOM!

MY STRENGTH HAS FINALLY FAILED ME! BUT--MY ENCHANTED HAMMER SHALL SERVE TO KEEP THE WALL FROM ENGULFING ME!!

ONCE BEFORE THE WRATH OF ODIN CAUSED HALF MY POWER TO BE SHORN FROM MY LIMBS! I AM NOW BEING PUNISHED SO AGAIN??

*AS SEEN, LO, THESE MANY MONTHS AGO-- BUT ONLY ODIN REMEMBERS WHEN!-- EMBARRASSED STAN.



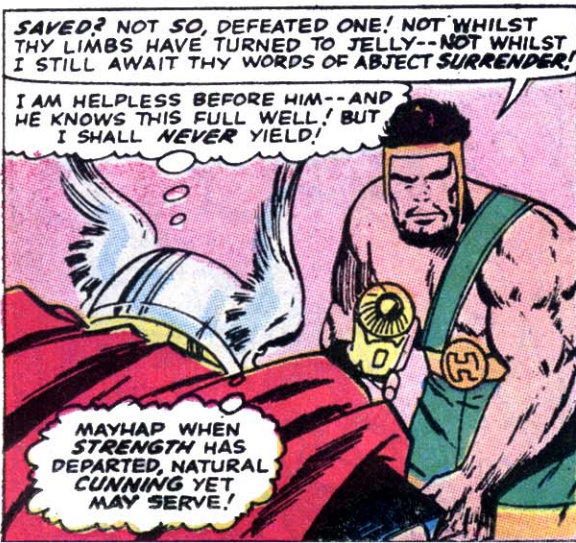
EVEN WITH THE AID OF MY URU MALLET, I CAN NO LONGER BEAR THE INDESCRIBABLE PRESSURE--!

I MUST RELEASE IT SUDDENLY-- AND PRAY I CAN ROLL ASIDE IN TIME!



THROOM!

BY THE GOLDEN GIRDLE OF VOLSTAGG-- I AM SAVED!



SAVED? NOT SO, DEFEATED ONE! NOT WHILST THY LIMBS HAVE TURNED TO JELLY--NOT WHILST I STILL AWAIT THY WORDS OF ABJECT SURRENDER!

I AM HELPLESS BEFORE HIM--AND HE KNOWS THIS FULL WELL! BUT I SHALL NEVER YIELD!

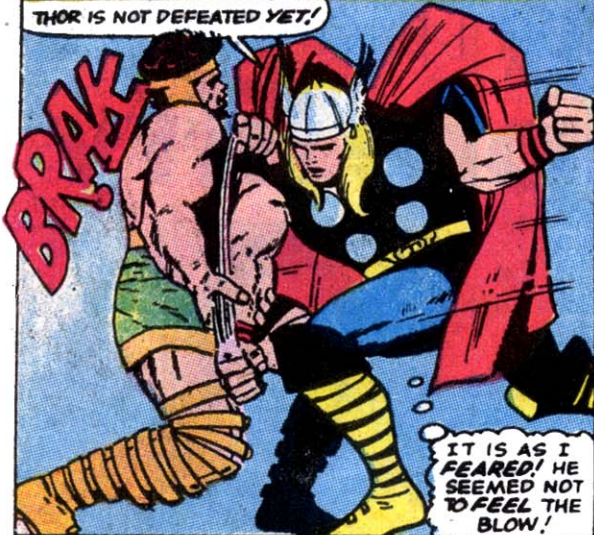
MAYHAP WHEN STRENGTH HAS DEPARTED, NATURAL CUNNING YET MAY SERVE!



SINCE THY STRENGTH HATH DESERTED THEE, HERCULES' ZEST FOR BATTLE IS GONE! THEREFORE, LET US PUT AN END TO THIS FARCE! PREPARE FOR THINE UNDOING, PITIFUL ONE!

BUT, ALTHOUGH KNOWING HE IS NO LONGER A MATCH FOR HERCULES, THE IMMORTAL AVENGER IS STILL GOD OF THUNDER-- STILL A FIGHTER-- TO THE END--!

THOR IS NOT DEFEATED YET!



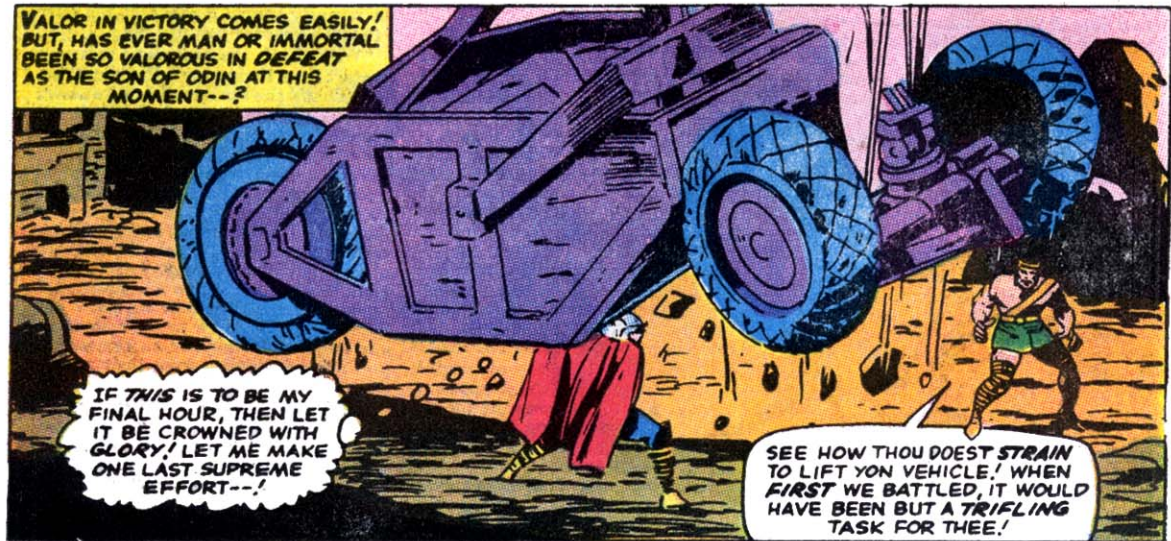
IT IS AS I FEARED! HE SEEMED NOT TO FEEL THE BLOW!

IF THAT IS ALL THE FORCE THOU CANST MUSTER-- THE END SHALL BE SOONER THAN I THOUGHT!

UNHHHH--!



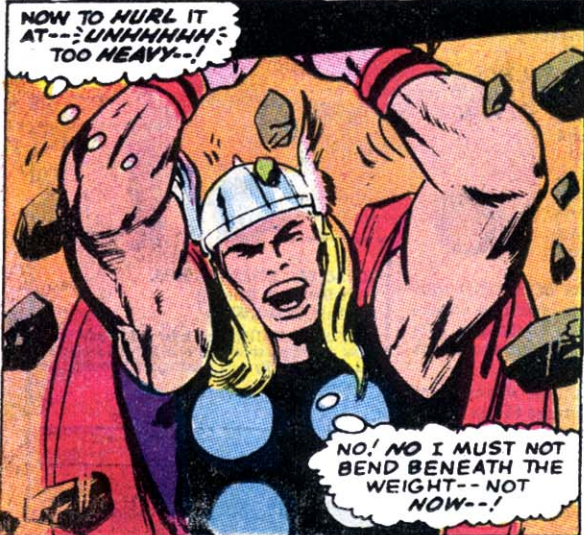
VALOR IN VICTORY COMES EASILY! BUT, HAS EVER MAN OR IMMORTAL BEEN SO VALOROUS IN DEFEAT AS THE SON OF ODIN AT THIS MOMENT--?



IF THIS IS TO BE MY FINAL HOUR, THEN LET IT BE CROWNED WITH GLORY! LET ME MAKE ONE LAST SUPREME EFFORT--!

SEE HOW THOU DOEST STRAIN TO LIFT YON VEHICLE! WHEN FIRST WE BATTLED, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BUT A TRIFLING TASK FOR THEE!

NOW TO HURL IT AT-- UNHHHHH! TOO HEAVY--!



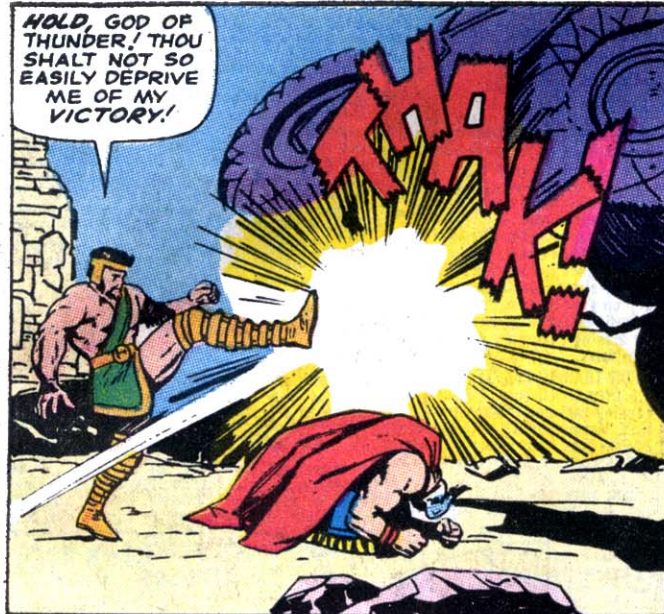
NO! NO I MUST NOT BEND BENEATH THE WEIGHT-- NOT NOW--!

BUT, TRY AS HE MAY, THE GALLANT THUNDER GOD CANNOT PREVAIL AGAINST THE TONS OF STEEL WHICH HE HAD VAINLY TRIED TO HURL AT HIS SNEERING FOE--!

PERHAPS-- 'TIS BEST TO END THIS WAY! WITHOUT MY POWER-- I AM USELESS!

NOW THAT MY LIMBS HAVE FAILED ME-- NOTHING REMAINS-- SAVE DEATH!





HOLD, GOD OF THUNDER! THOU SHALT NOT SO EASILY DEPRIVE ME OF MY VICTORY!



ON THY FEET, ASGARDIAN! MOUTH THE WORDS I AM WAITING TO HEAR! TELL HERCULES THAT THOR ABJECTLY SURRENDERS! SPEAK, VANQUISHED ONE!

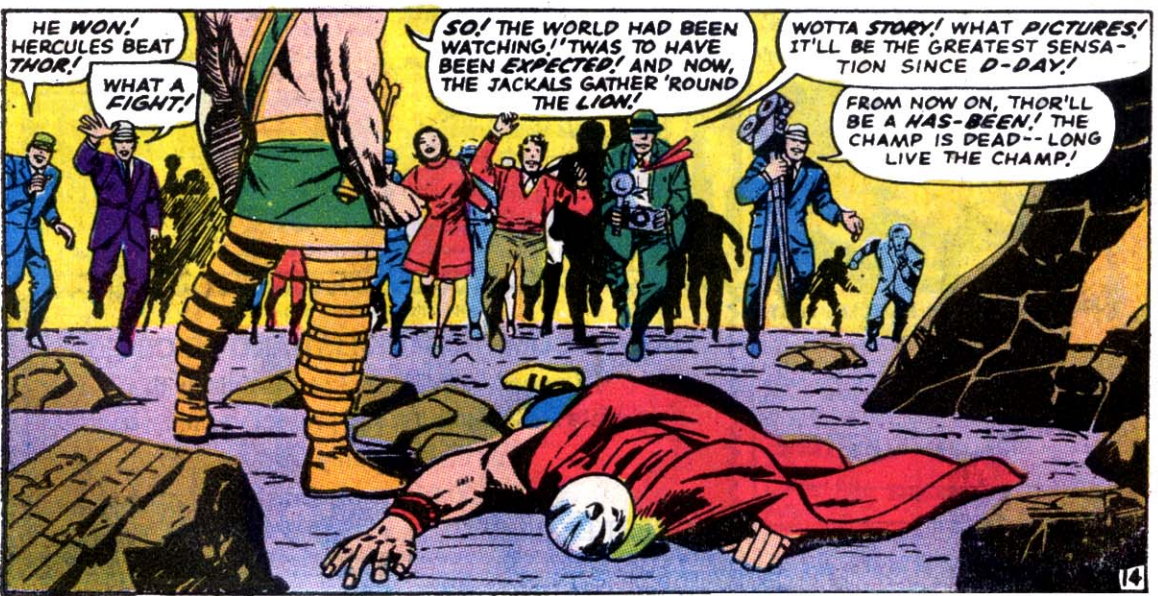
NEVER! NOT WHILE BREATH REMAINS WITHIN ME! NOT WHILE LIFE ENDURES!



STILL THOU FIGHTEST ON?! STILL THOU STRIKETH AT THY MASTER?! THOU ART TRULY MAD!



AND THIS THEN SHALL BE THY PAEAN OF DEFEAT!



HE WON! HERCULES BEAT THOR!

WHAT A FIGHT!

SO! THE WORLD HAD BEEN WATCHING, 'T WAS TO HAVE BEEN EXPECTED! AND NOW, THE JACKALS GATHER 'ROUND THE LION!

WOTTA STORY! WHAT PICTURES! IT'LL BE THE GREATEST SENSATION SINCE D-DAY!

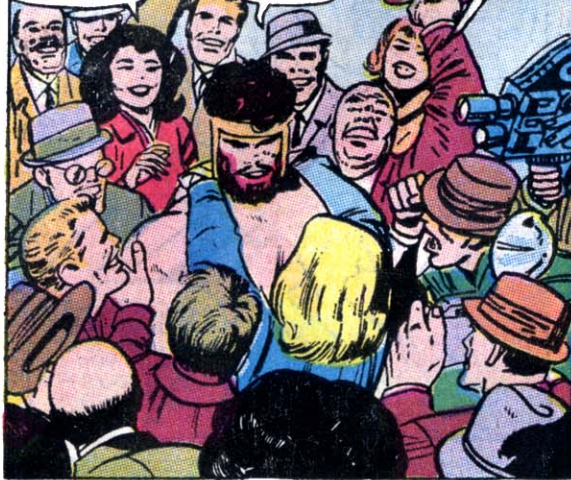
FROM NOW ON, THOR'LL BE A HAS-BEEN! THE CHAMP IS DEAD--LONG LIVE THE CHAMP!

OBLIVIOUS TO THE FALLEN THUNDER GOD, THE EXUBERANT CROWD MILLS AROUND THE SMILING MERCULES--CHEERING THE VICTOR, AS CROWDS HAVE DONE SINCE TIME IMMEMORIAL--!

HERCULES-- YOU'RE THE GREATEST!

I GOTTA SHAKE HIS HAND--I JUST GOTTA!

YAY FOR MERCULES!



BUT THEN, ONE BREATHLESS FIGURE SHOULDERS HIS WAY THRU THE JOSTLING THROG--

HERCULES-- REMEMBER ME? I'M THE ONE WHO OFFERED YOU A MOVIE CONTRACT BEFORE! THE OFFER STILL GOES, HANDSOME! WE'LL MAKE YOU FAMOUS!

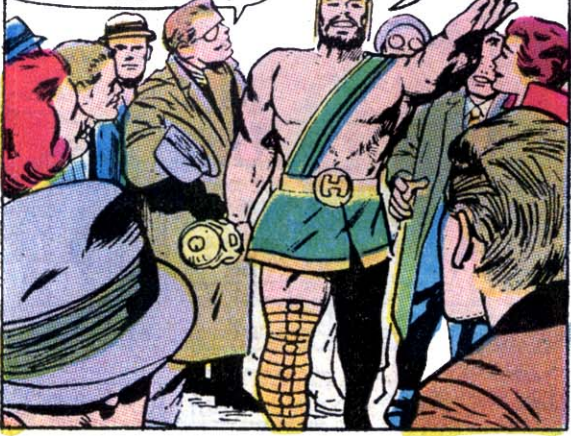
YOU WILL MAKE HERCULES FAMOUS??!



*THEY MET IN THOR #125, TO BE EXACT!-- STICKLER STAN!

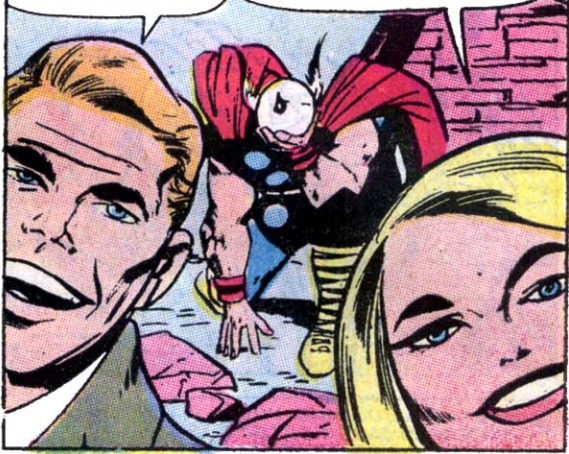
THINK OF IT, BIG FELLA! YOUR OWN SWIMMING POOL! BEAUTIFUL STARLETS! FAN CLUBS! TV RESIDUALS!

I ACCEPT! THE WORLD MUST NOT BE DEPRIVED OF MY GREAT TALENT!



MAN! THAT CAT'S THE LIVIN' END! HE COMES ON LIKE GANGBUSTERS!

HE'S NO HANDSOMER THAN THOR-- BUT THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT HIM-- HE'S SO DEVIL-MAY-CARE!



HERCULES-- GONE! THE CROWD-- DRIFTING AWAY... THEN IT'S TRUE-- IT REALLY HAPPENED--!

I HAVE BEEN DEFEATED-- AT LONG LAST!

AND NONE THERE ARE-- WHO STAY BEHIND-- WITH A LOSER--!



HEY, GANG-- LOOK! THE THUNDER GOD'S BACK WITH US AGAIN! HOW ABOUT THAT?

HUH! IF YA ASK ME, HE SHOULDA STAYED IN BED!

FROM WHERE I SIT, HIS THUNDER SOUNDS MORE LIKE A SHAKY SQUEAK!



SO! IT HAS COME TO THIS! MIGHTY THOR IS NAUGHT BUT AN OBJECT OF RIDICULE FOR THE MASSES!

THOR! OH, THANK HEAVENS YOU'RE ALL RIGHT! AT LAST I'VE FOUND YOU!

YOU! WHY DO YOU REMAIN BEHIND? HAS VICTORIOUS HERCULES NO TIME FOR THEE NOW??

DON'T SAY THAT, MY DARLING! YOU KNOW IT'S YOU I LOVE! IT'S ALWAYS BEEN YOU! IT'S ONLY BEEN YOU!

I ACTED LIKE A FOOL! I ONLY WANTED TO MAKE YOU JEALOUS--NOTHING MORE!

I'LL HEAR NO MORE! WHATEVER YOUR MOTIVES, YOU HAVE SET IN MOTION FORCES WHICH CANNOT NOW BE STOPPED! DESTINY HATH DEALT US A MOST TRAGIC BLOW, MY BELOVED!

WH-WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?

I AM NO LONGER THE ONE I WAS! NO LONGER AM I WORTHY TO WEAR THE MANTLE OF THUNDER GOD! NO LONGER AM I WORTHY OF THEE, JANE FOSTER!

NOW MUST I LEAVE THEE! NEVER SHALL WE MEET AGAIN--UNTIL I CAN RE-GAIN MINE HONOR!

NO! YOU CAN'T--! I DON'T CARE THAT YOU WERE BEATEN--!

BUT THOR CARES! THOR MUST CARRY THE SCAR--FOREVER!

SUDDENLY, A BOOMING VOICE THUNDERS IN JANE FOSTER'S BRAIN! THE VOICE OF ODIN, LORD OF ASGARD--A VOICE QUIVERING WITH DESPERATE PRIDE--!

MY SON WAS NOT BEATEN! HIS VICTORY WAS STOLEN FROM HIM--STOLEN BY A SHAMED AND REMORSEFUL FATHER!

HE FOUGHT LIKE THE TRUE SON OF ODIN-- HE BORE HIS DEFEAT LIKE A GOD! BUT NOW-- HE HATH NEED OF THEE! HE HATH DONE PENANCE ENOUGH! GO TO HIM, WOMAN!

I WILL! OH, I WILL!

SPECIAL BULLPEN NOTE:

DO NOT EVEN TRY TO GUESS WHAT OUR NEXT ISSUE WILL BE--!



SUFFICE IT TO SAY THAT IT SHALL EXCEED THY FONDEST HOPES, THY MOST EXTRAVAGANT EXPECTATIONS! WE HAVE SPOKEN!

TALES OF ASGARD, HOME OF THE MIGHTY NORSE GODS!

THE SUMMONS!

KNOW YOU, QUEEN ULA, MY MEN AND I ARE ON A ROYAL QUEST UNDER ORDERS OF LORDLY ODIN HIMSELF! YET, YOU HAVE DARED TO CAPTURE MY STEP-BROTHER, LOKI!!

ONLY TO BRING YOU TO MY SIDE, MIGHTY THOR!

AM I NOT QUEEN OF THE FLYING TROLLS? THERE IS NOTHING ULA DOES NOT DARE!

THOR--! ENOUGH TALK! LET ME BE FRED!

SCRIPT:
STAN LEE

ART:
JACK KIRBY

INKING:
V. COLLETTA

LETTERING:
ARTIE SIMEK

SO BE IT!!



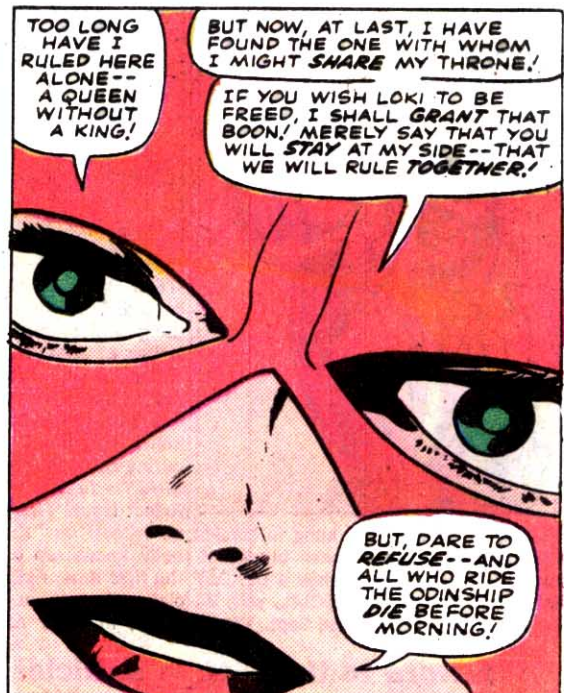
REMEMBER, GOD OF THUNDER, THIS IS **THRYMHEIM**-- THIS IS MY DOMAIN! 'TIS I WHO AM THE POWER HERE!

HAY, MY QUEEN! WHERE E'ER A TRUE WARRIOR OF ASGARD TRODS, 'TIS THERE THAT POWER REPOSES! NOW LET LOKI BE UNSHACKLED!



ALL IN GOOD TIME, NOBLE THOR!

THOR! THY NAME HAS THE RING OF MAJESTY TO IT! YOU ARE ALL I KNEW YOU WOULD BE-- AND MORE!



TOO LONG HAVE I RULED HERE ALONE-- A QUEEN WITHOUT A KING!

BUT NOW, AT LAST, I HAVE FOUND THE ONE WITH WHOM I MIGHT SHARE MY THRONE!

IF YOU WISH LOKI TO BE FREED, I SHALL GRANT THAT BOON! MERELY SAY THAT YOU WILL STAY AT MY SIDE-- THAT WE WILL RULE TOGETHER!

BUT, DARE TO REFUSE-- AND ALL WHO RIDE THE ODINSHIP DIE BEFORE MORNING!

'TIS NO EMPTY THREAT I UTTER! MY WARRIORS ARE AS LIMITLESS AS THE SANDS ON THE SHORE!

YOU CANNOT REFUSE HER, THOR! YOU MUST SACRIFICE YOURSELF FOR THE GOOD OF THE REST!

SILENCE, BASE LOKI! EVEN AT SUCH A MOMENT, YOU THINK ONLY OF YOURSELF! YOU SHAME THE NAME OF VALOR!



SUDDENLY, SILENTLY--UTTERLY WITHOUT WARNING--A SENSE-SHATTERING BURST OF ANTI-ENERGY FILLS THE AIR--A FLASH WHICH INSTANTLY FELLS THE LEGION OF FLYING TROLLS...



ONLY WE TWO STILL REMAIN CONSCIOUS! WHAT HAS BEFALLEN MUST TRULY BE A SIGN FROM OMNIPOTENT ODIN HIMSELF!

FASTER! FASTER! ONCE AWAY FROM THIS ACCURSED STONE BEEHIVE MY POWER WILL AGAIN RETURN TO ME!



IS THAT ALL THAT CONCERNS YOU, LOKI? DOES NAUGHT BUT THE THOUGHT OF POWER OCCUPY THY MIND?

ALL ELSE IS EMPTY--MEANINGLESS! POWER IS ALL!





MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE VALIANT ODINSHIP, WE FIND...

FASTER, THOU LAGGARDS! ROW EVER FASTER! WE MUST RESCUE THOR!

AND WHY DOES YOUR BACK NOT BEND OVER YONDER OAR AS WELL, BLUSTERING VOLSTAGG?

I?? I MUST SAVE MY STRENGTH, KRODA! FOR I SHALL LEAD THE ATTACK UPON THE STONE HIVE!

THINK, THOU WITLESS OAF, HOW ONE BLISTER UPON THIS MIGHTY FINGER COULD LOSE AN ENTIRE BATTLE FOR ASSGARD!

DO NOT FEAR, GALLANT VOLSTAGG--WE HAVE BLISTER OINTMENT AMONGST OUR STORES!

THEREFORE, AS ACTING CAPTAIN, IN THE ABSENCE OF THOR, I ORDER THEE TO ROW WITH THE OTHERS!



WILLINGLY DO I OBEY, LOYAL BALDER!

BUT, 'TIS TRULY A PITY THAT SUCH SEATS ARE BUILT FOR FAR LESSER MEN THAN MOUNTAINOUS VOLSTAGG!

HAVE A CARE, ENORMOUS ONE, LEST THOU JOSTLE HALF OUR CREW INTO THE SEA!

BUMBLING BUFFOON! THERE IS NO ROOM HERE FOR THEE!



LET THE ROWING DESIST! WE HAVE RETURNED!

MIGHTY THOR! THOU HAST RESCUED THY BROTHER! ODIN BE PRAISED!

RESCUED INDEED, 'T WAS THE MEREST ACCIDENT! ANY MIGHT HAVE DONE THE SAME!

MAYHAP-- BUT THE HAND IS THOR'S THAT HOLDS THEE!



VOLSTAGG WAS BUT MOMENTS BEHIND THEE, THOR! HAD YOU NOT RESCUED LOKI, THE FLYING TROLLS WOULD HAVE ANSWERED TO ME! I WOULD HAVE CRUSHED THEM LIKE FLEAS!

ODDS BLOOD, BELLOWING ONE-- IN TRUTH, THOU MIGHT HAVE TALKED THEM TO DEATH!

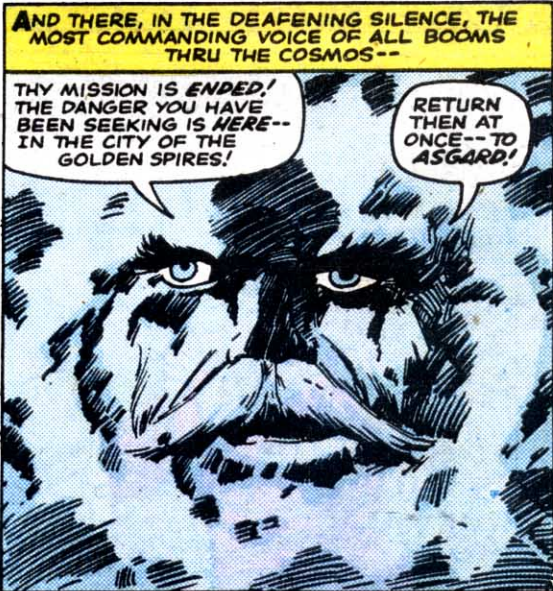
NONE BUT ODIN, THE ALL-WISE, COULD HAVE SAVED US!

FOR ONCE MY BROTHER SPEAKS THE TRUTH, ODIN DID IT FOR ME! THE LIFE OF LOKI! IS TOO PRECIOUS TO BE PLACED IN JEOPARDY!



LET ALL BOW DOWN! LET NO MAN SPEAK!

AN IMAGE OF THE SOVEREIGN OF SOVEREIGNS DO TH APPEAR BEFORE US!



AND THERE, IN THE DEAFENING SILENCE, THE MOST COMMANDING VOICE OF ALL BOOMS THRU THE COSMOS--

THY MISSION IS ENDED! THE DANGER YOU HAVE BEEN SEEKING IS HERE-- IN THE CITY OF THE GOLDEN SPIRES!

RETURN THEN AT ONCE-- TO ASGARD!

**NEXT ISSUE:
THE MEANING OF
RAGNAROK!**