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THE MIGHTY THOR™



pollard



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!**

IN THE MISTY SPACE BETWEEN ASSARD AND EARTH, THE MIGHTY THOR VIEWS A SCENE THAT OCCURRED A THOUSAND YEARS AGO... WHEN GODS STILL TRAVERSED FREELY THE MORTAL PLANE.

IT IS A SCENE CONJURED FOR HIM BY THE DISEMBODIED EYE OF HIS ALMIGHTY FATHER-- ODIN, WHICH FOR PURPOSES OF ITS OWN, IS IMPARTING REVELATIONS TO THE STARTLED THUNDER GOD THAT HAVE BEEN KEPT HIDDEN FROM HIM BY THE SELFSAME LORD OF ASSARD!



DRAGON'S BLOOD!

Based on the Opera "SIEGFRIED" by Richard Wagner. Art adapted by Roy Thomas.

LEIHO
RALPH MACCHIO • KEITH POLLARD • CHIC STONE • JOE ROSEN • GAFF • JIM SALICRUP • JIM SHOOTER
SCRIPT ART LETTERS COLORS EDITOR EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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EYE HAVE SHOWN YOU, ODINSON, HOW YOUR DIVINE FATHER DID ATTEMPT TO WREST THE FABLED RING OF POWER FROM THE STORM GIANT TURNED DRAGON--FAFNIR... HE, TO WHOM ODIN HAD GRUDGINGLY GIVEN IT IN EXCHANGE FOR THE RETURN OF THE GODDESS IDUNN AND HER APPLES OF IMMORTALITY, BUT THE ALL-FATHER WAS FORBIDDEN BY HIS OWN OATH TO TAKE BACK THE RING DIRECTLY, YET SO GREAT WAS ODIN'S FEAR OF THE RING'S AWESOME POWER OVER GODS AND MEN--

--THAT HE DIDST IMPART THE ESSENCE OF HIS OWN BLOODSON THOR, IN TWO MORTAL INCARNATIONS TO UNKNOWINGLY CARRY OUT THE DEED OF ACQUISITION IN HIS STEAD!

BUT THE FIRST--SIEGMUND-- WAS SLAIN BY ODIN AT THE BEHEST OF HIS WIFE, FRIGGA, WHEN SHE DISCOVERED SIEGMUND'S TRANSGRESSIONS OF SACRED MARRIAGE VOWS.

AND THE SECOND--SIEGFRIED, SIEGMUND'S SON-- NOW CONFRONTS FAFNIR AT HIS CAVE, ACCOMPANIED BY THE EVIL DWARF MIMME, WHO RAISED SIEGFRIED IN THE HOPE THAT HE WOULD ONE DAY KILL THE DRAGON, THUS THE RING OF POWER WOULD FALL INTO MIMME'S GRASPING HANDS.

NEARBY, ALBERICH, MIMME'S BROTHER, WHO FORGED THE DREADED RING FROM THE PRICELESS RHWINGOLD-- BEFORE LOSING IT TO ODIN THROUGH TRICKERY-- KEEPS WATCH...

... FOR HE, TOO, COVETS THE GLEAMING BAND.

AND ODIN HIMSELF, IN HIS EARTHLY GUISE OF THE WANDERER, AWAITS WHAT MAY BE THE CLIMAX OF EVENTS HE SET IN MOTION SO LONG AGO!

WITH THE DRAGON'S APPROACH-- THE COWARDLY MIMME PANICS... BARELY ABLE TO BLURT OUT THAT THE MONSTER'S HEART IS IN THE SAME PLACE AS IN ANY OTHER BEAST.

AS THE BATTLE NEARS COMMENCEMENT, THE DWARFISH ONE HURRIEDLY SEEKS SHELTER...



...WHILE SIEGFRIED PAYS HOMAGE TO HIS SACRED SWORD "NEEDFUL" FORGED FROM THE FRAGMENTS OF THE BLADE HIS FATHER SIEGMUND SHATTERED IN FINAL BATTLE.



BUT AS HE KNEELS, SIEGFRIED'S MEDITATIONS ARE INTERRUPTED...

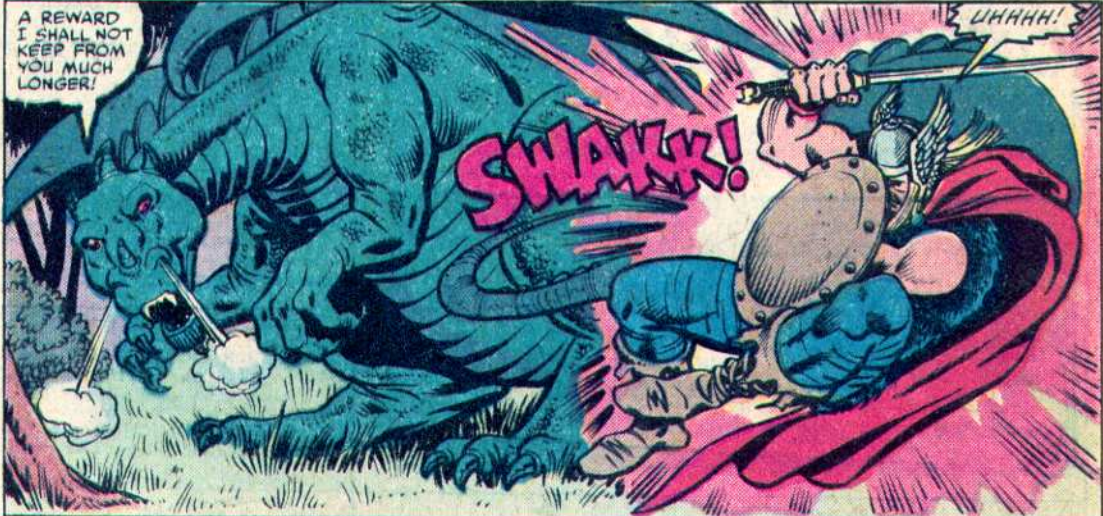
EH? WHY DO YOU ALIGHT UPON MY SHOULDER, BIRDLING, AND SING WITH SUCH FERVOR AS IF A MESSAGE YOU CARRIED TO ME? STRANGE... A QUARRELSOME DWARF ONCE TOLD ME HE KNEW WHAT BIRDS WERE SAYING IN SONG-- AND MEN MIGHT FIND THE MEANING. BUT HOW?



IT IS YOUR DEATH-SONG WHICH THE WINGED ONE CHIRPS... YOUR REWARD FOR SEEKING FAFNIR IN HIS LAIR-- HATE-CAVERN.



A REWARD I SHALL NOT KEEP FROM YOU MUCH LONGER!



UHHHH!

SWAKK!

NAY, DRAGON, IT IS NOT DEATH I COME SEEKING-- NEVER DEATH! THERE IS ANOTHER PRIZE WHICH SHALL MAKE MY VICTORY EVER SWEET!

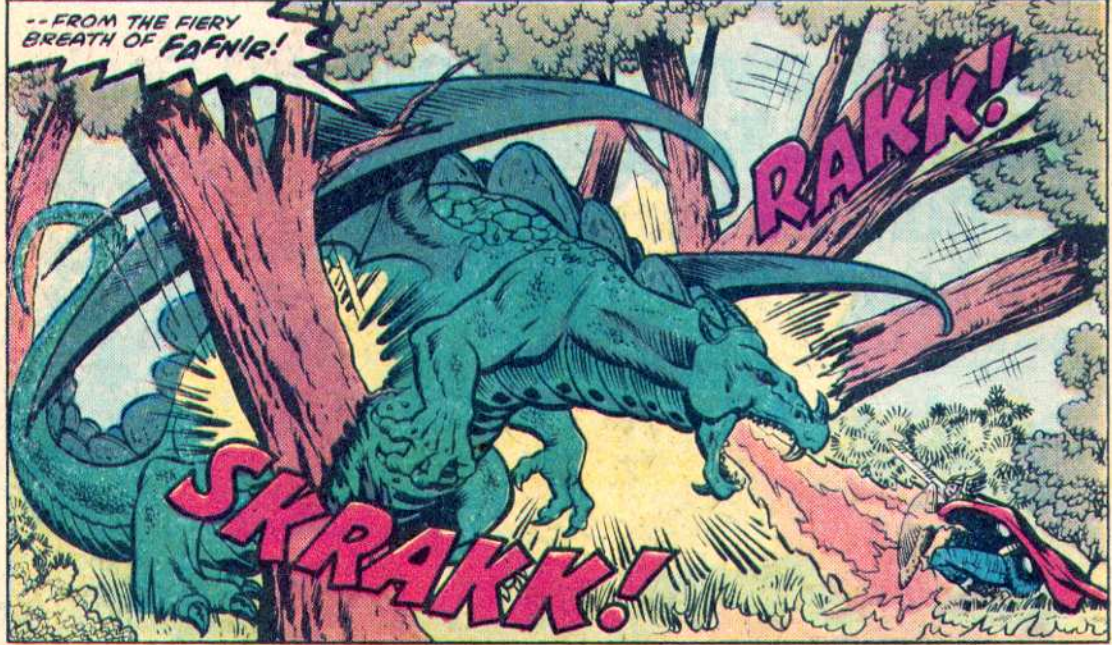


AHHH, THE FOOLISH GNOME WHO WAS AT YOUR SIDE, HE DID SPEAK OF FEAR-- AND HOW I MAY TEACH IT TO THEE, WELL, IF THAT IS WHY YOU HAVE SOUGHT ME, THEN YOU SHALL LEARN ALL--



WHUKK!

-- FROM THE FIERY BREATH OF FAFNIR!



YOU ANSWER NOT, IS THE LESSON LEARNED, MY TINY FOE?



IT IS NOT EVEN BEGUN, FAFNIR!



BUT I SHALL LEARN OF FEAR FROM YOU THIS DAY-- OR I SHALL CLEAVE YOUR SCALY FLESH FROM YOUR BONES!

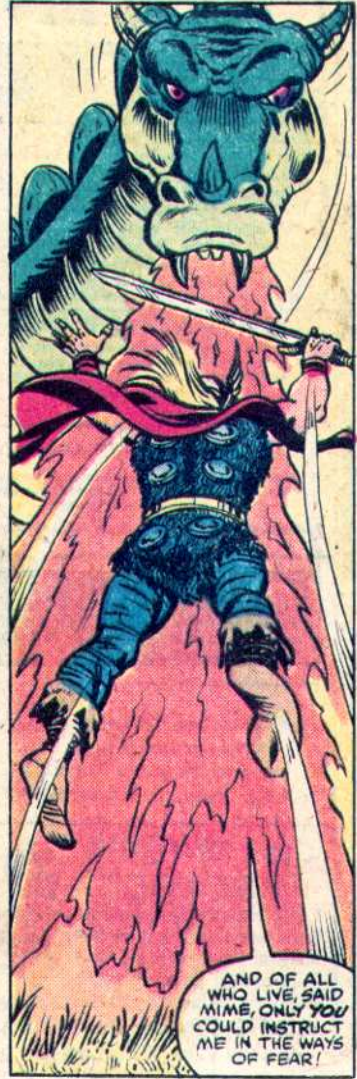
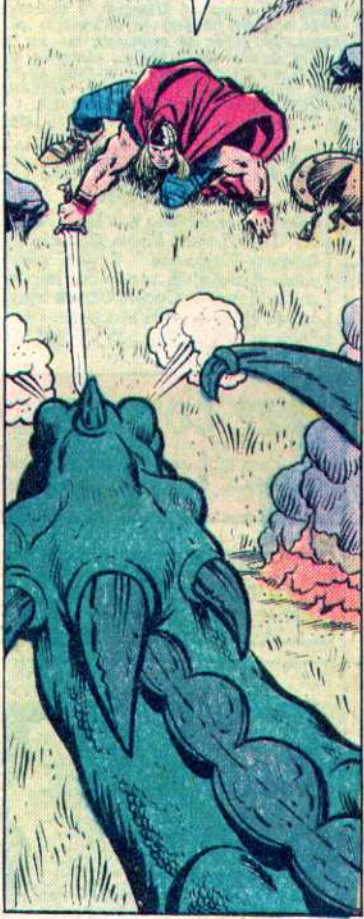


YOU NEEDN'T DO THAT, BLONDBAIR, FOR GLADLY WILL I SHOW YOU WHY ALL WHO LIVE FEAR THE DWELLER OF THE HATE-CAVERN.



BUT WHY DO YOU SEARCH OUT THAT WHICH CAN ONLY DIMINISH YOUR MIGHTY STATURE?

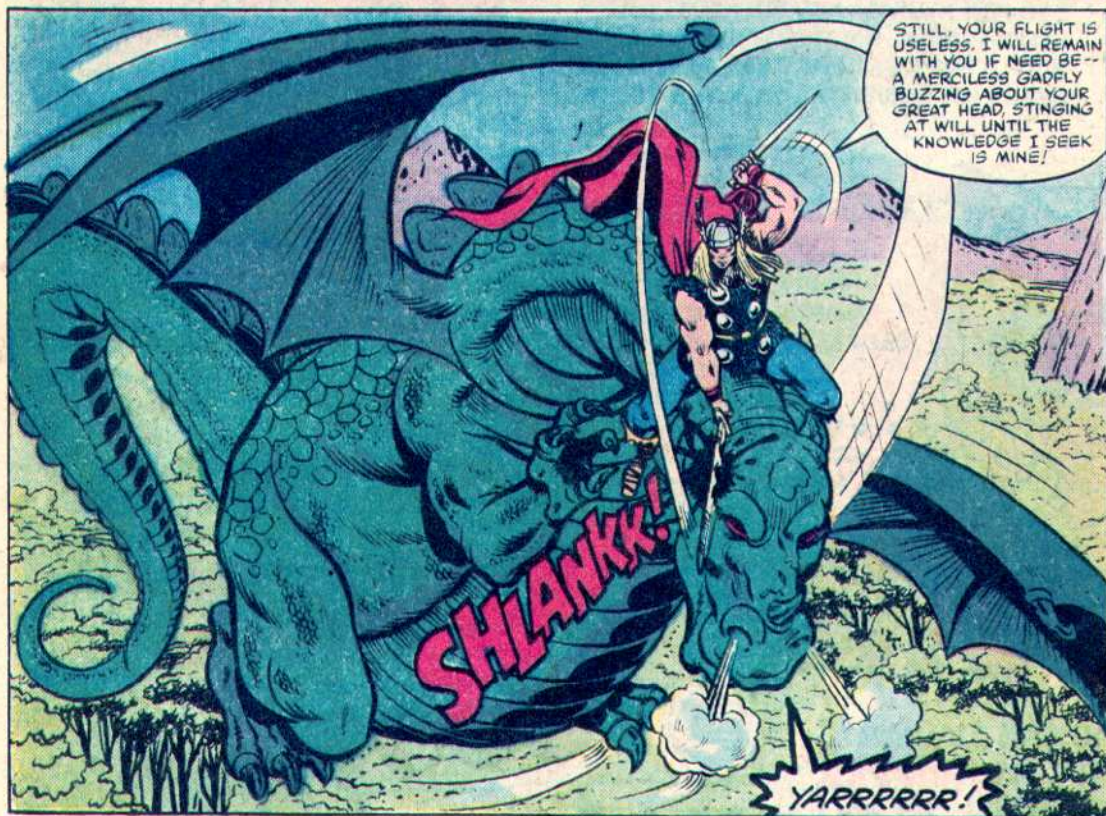
DIMINISH-- YOU LIE! THE DWARF MIME, WHO RAISED ME, HAS SAID THAT I POSSESS ALL THE ATTRIBUTES NECESSARY TO BECOME THE MIGHTIEST WARRIOR OF ALL-- ALL ATTRIBUTES SAVE ONE... I MUST KNOW AND EXPERIENCE FEAR!



AND OF ALL WHO LIVE, SAID MIME, ONLY YOU COULD INSTRUCT ME IN THE WAYS OF FEAR!

AND BY ALL THE GODS ABOVE AND BELOW-- YOU SHALL, DRAGON! YOU SHALL!







NOW SHALL I STRIKE WHILE HAVING GAINED FAVORED POSITION... NOW SHALL NEEDFUL DRINK DEEPLY--**NALVING** YOUR SIGHT!



RRRAAHHH!

AWAY NOISOME FLEA! YOUR INFERNAL BOASTING VEXES ME MORE THAN THE LOSS OF A HUNDRED EYES COULD!

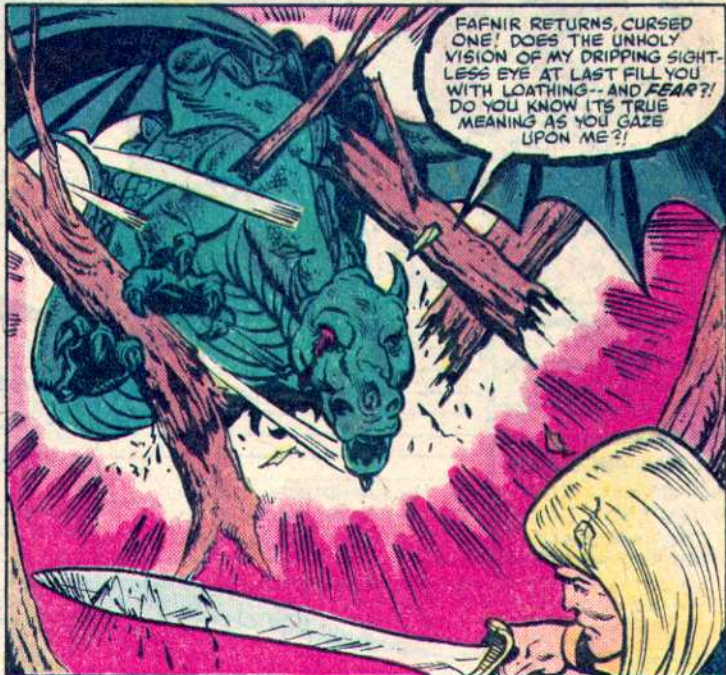


KKRRAACHH!



OH... WOULD THAT ALL WHO OPPOSED ME IN THE PAST DID BATTLE WITH THE FEROCITY OF FAFNIR, BUT NOW HE IS FLEO--AND WITH HIM, WHATEVER CHANCE OF BECOMING A WARRIOR IN BODY AND SOUL.

BUT HOLD--A DARK SHADOW FROM ABOVE PASSES OVER ME, BLOTING OUT THE SUN! COULD IT BE--



FAFNIR RETURNS, CURSED ONE! DOES THE UNHOLY VISION OF MY DRIPPING SIGHTLESS EYE AT LAST FILL YOU WITH LOATHING--AND FEAR?! DO YOU KNOW ITS TRUE MEANING AS YOU GAZE UPON ME?!

NAY-- NAY, MONSTER! IT DOES NOT!
I FEEL ONLY ANGER AT ONE WHO
TAUNTS ME-- WHO SOUGHT TO
DECEIVE ME AND PREVENT MY
ASCENSION TO WARRIOR-HOOD!

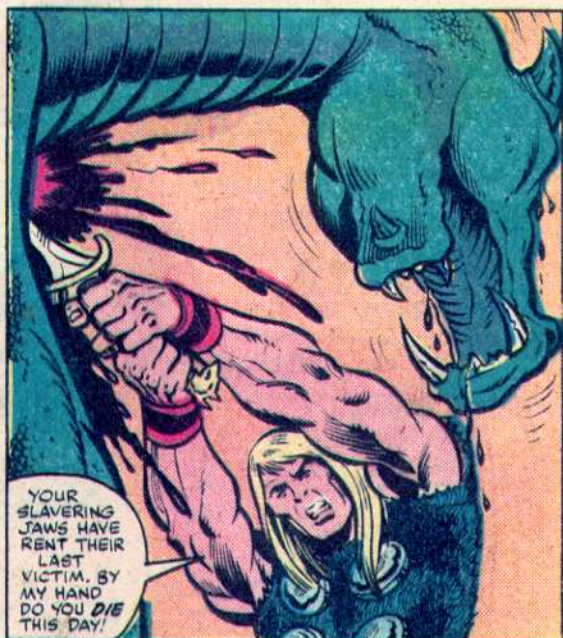
BUT IF I CANNOT WREST THE SECRET
OF FEAR FROM YOUR SNARLING LIPS
THEN I SHALL AT LEAST BE CERTAIN
THAT YOU WILL NOT LIVE TO SPEAK
IN MOCKING TONES OF YOUR
ILL-CONCEIVED VICTORY.



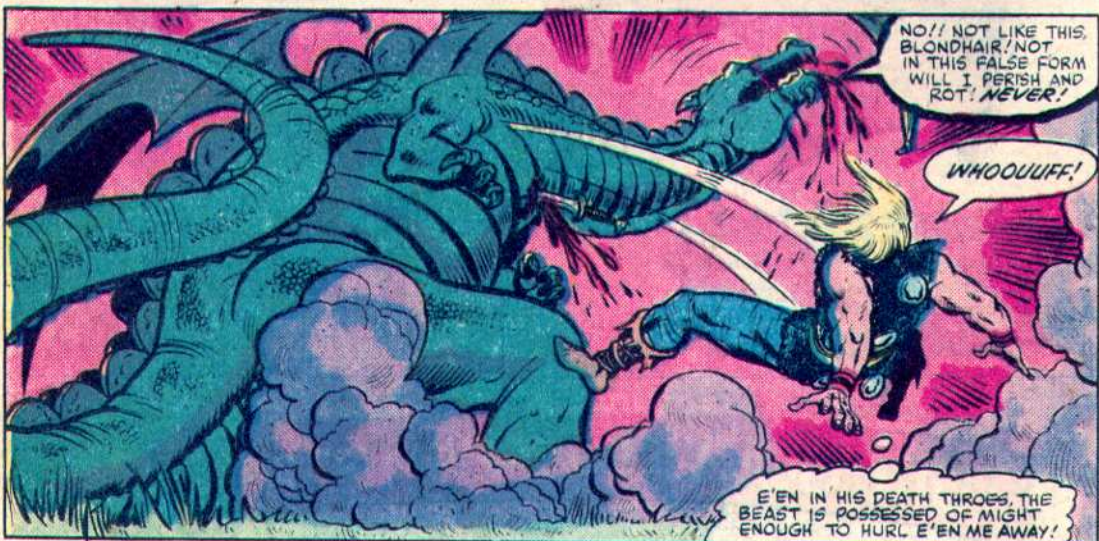
YYRRRGGH!



HO, DRAGON!
YOUR SOFT
UNDERBELLY IN-
VITES A HARDY
THRUST! NEEDFUL
HAS FOUND ITS
MARK IN THE HEART
BEHIND YOUR
HEAVING BREAST.



YOUR
SLAVERING
JAWS HAVE
RENT THEIR
LAST
VICTIM. BY
MY HAND
DO YOU DIE
THIS DAY!



NO!! NOT LIKE THIS,
BLONDHAIR! NOT
IN THIS FALSE FORM
WILL I PERISH AND
ROT! NEVER!


WHOOOUFF!

E'EN IN HIS DEATH THROES, THE
BEAST IS POSSESSED OF MIGHT
ENOUGH TO HURL E'EN ME AWAY!




NOT AS SHARP-TOOTHED LIZARD WILL FAFNIR HIE TO HIS REST... BUT AS JOTHUNHEIM-BORN **STORM GIANT** WILL I LIE FOR ETERNITY, FOOD FOR THE FAMISHED BUZZARDS.

GRANT ME ONE REQUEST ERE I DIE... TELL ME WHO YOU ARE, FAIR SIEGFRIED. WHAT IS YOUR TRUE NATURE?




MUCH OF MY PAST IS SHROUDED IN SHADOW... BUT OF THIS I AM CERTAIN... IT WAS YOUR **SILENCE** WHICH SPURRED MY MURDEROUS DEED-- SO THAT I NOW LAY SPATTERED WITH YOUR BLOOD. BLOOD THAT I **TASTE** AS IT RUNS FREELY INTO MY MOUTH!

I-- I FEEL STRANGE, AS IF NEW PERCEPTIONS WERE AWAKENING WITHIN ME... AS IF I WOULD SOON COME TO UNDERSTAND THINGS WHICH HAVE OF LATE CONFUNDED ME.



HEED ME, STRPLING-- THERE IS LITTLE TIME. MY OWN BROTHER, **FASOLT**, DID I KILL IN THE PAST TO OBTAIN THE FATAL RHINGOLD, WHICH WAS STOLEN FROM THE RHINEMAIDENS BY ALBERICH-- HE WHO WAS WITHOUT LOVE.

WHY DO YOU SPEAK THIS TALE OF WOE, GIANT?



BECAUSE THE COVETED HOARD IS YOURS NOW, WON UPON MY DEATH. BUT BEWARE, BLOSSOMING HERO... FOR TREASON FOLLOWS HE WHO HOLDS IT, AND THE ONE WHO PLOTTED FOR YOU THIS TERRIBLE DEED... SHAPES YOU FOR DEATH. UHHHH...

GONE. HE SPOKE OF A RING BEFORE... PERHAPS IT, TOO, IS PART OF THE TREASURE.



IT GLOWS BRIGHTLY-- AND HOW EASILY IT SLIDES FROM THE GIANT'S FINGER, WITH MY NEW-FOUND AWARENESS I SEEM TO SENSE IT CALLING ME-- WHISPERING TO ME IN THE DARK RECESSES OF MY MIND.

AND NOW IT **SHRINKS** AS IF BY DESIGN, TO THE SIZE SUITABLE FOR A MAN.



THE RING... 'T WAS MEANT TO BE MINE-- INTENDED FOR ME... NONE SHALL E'ER WREST IT AWAY. IT FILLS ME WITH A SENSE OF PURPOSE AND POWER BEYOND E'EN THAT OF NEEDFUL ITSELF.



FAFNIR DID SPEAK OF A TREASURE-- A HOARD OF PRICELESS GOLD AND GEMS HE GUARDED. THEY MUST LAY HERE IN HIS SHUNNED HATE-CAVERN.

AHHH, THE YOUNG FOOL HAS TRIUMPHED OVER THE DRAGON. HE WEARS THE RING WHICH THROUGH MALEVOLENT MEANS I SHALL SOON ATTAIN-- AND END HIS BUMBLING LIFE AS WELL.



WHERE ARE YOU SLINKING OFF TO, ACCURSED BROTHER? WHAT DEVILISH ACT HAVE I CAUGHT YOU IN THE MIDST OF?

EH?
ALBRICHT!



WHAT I HAVE ACHIEVED THROUGH TOIL AND CUNNING SHALL NOT BE TAKEN FROM ME. THOUGH YOU FASHIONED THE RING-- IT WAS STOLEN FROM YOU AND GIVEN OVER TO THE WRETCHED FAFNIR.

MY WAIT HAS BEEN LONG, BUT THE YOUNGLING SHALL SOON TURN HIS BOOTY OVER TO MINE-- WHO RAISED HIM FROM YOUTH AS IF A SON.



MUST YOU HOARD WITH GREED WHAT THE STRIPLING HAS WON FOR YOU?

I'D RATHER THE RING WENT TO A MANGY DOG THAN YOU, LOU-- YOU'LL NEVER POSSESS IT.



SHOULD YOU ATTEMPT ITS THEFT, ALBRICHT-- I SHALL CALL FOR VALIANT SIEGFRIED, TO HELP WITH HIS TRUSTY SWORD. THE DAUNTLESS BOY WILL MAKE YOU PAY, BROTHER OF MINE.

HAH! YOU SPEAK EMPTY THREATS, BROTHER-- PROMPTED BY YOUR EVIDENT FEAR.



WHILE INSIDE FAFNIR'S DARK CAVE-- FEAR IS THE LAST THING UPON A STUNNED SIEGFRIED'S MIND.

SUCH RICHES-- A KING'S RANSOM AT A GLANCE WHO COULD HAVE BELIEVED? AND THIS MAGNIFICENT WAR CLOAK I HAVE FOUND HERE-- IT SHALL REPLACE THE ONE LOST IN BATTLE.

HMMM... THAT GLEAMING HELMET ALSO CATCHES MY EYE.

THE BROAD-SHOULDERED MAN STRIDES INTO THE BRIGHT SUNLIGHT AND IS ACCOSTED BY A SINGING FOREST BIRD.

YON BIRD SPEAKS AGAIN--YET NOW ITS LANGUAGE TO ME IS SOMEHOW CLEAR!

IT WARNS THAT MIME PLOTS TREACHERY AGAINST ME-- BUT THAT I MAY READ HIS INNERMOST THOUGHTS... FOR FAFNIR'S BLOOD, WHICH I HAVE TASTED IS CHARMED.

NO DOUBT HE WEIGHS THE BOOTY'S WORTH. THUS, I MUST SPRINKLE HIM WITH SUGARY, TRUTHLESS TALK TO OUTWIT THE SWAGGERING LAD.

WELCOME, SIEGFRIED. I HAVE BROUGHT YOUR HELMET TO YOU.

MY THANKS, MIME. I HAD THOUGHT IT LOST-- NOW I SHALL PLACE IT OVER MY NEW-FOUND HELMET.

SAY, MY BOLD ONE, WHAT IS THE MEANING OF FEAR?

NO TEACHER YET HAVE I FOUND.

BUT THE DRAGON... YOU HAVE DESTROYED HIM.

THOUGH QUITE A TERRIBLE FOE, HIS DEATH GRIEVES ME: FOR FAR MORE WICKED ROGUES REMAIN ALIVE AND UNPUNISHED.

YOUR THIRST MUST BE GREAT AFTER SUCH A MIGHTY ENCOUNTER. HERE, DRINK OF THE WINE FROM THIS FLAGON I HAVE BROUGHT YOU.

HE SUSPECTS NOT THAT THE LIQUID IS POISONED. ONCE IT HAS PASSED HIS LIPS, THE RING AND TREASURE WILL FALL TO ME.

I THANK YOU, GENEROUS MIME.

I THANK YOU FOR REVEALING YOURSELF AS MURDERER!

THIEF! YOU PLOT FOR MY SWORD AND ALL I HAVE FOUGHT FOR-- RING, HELMET AND BOOTY.

SO, MY SCHEMES ARE KNOWN TO YOU, EH? NO MATTER, FOR YOUR DEATH SHALL NOW COME BY THE BLADE RATHER THAN THE BOTTLE.

AWAY WITH YOU, DISGUSTING DWARF. MY LIFE SHALL NOT BE FORFEIT FOR GLEAMING BAUBLES, HOWEVER VALUABLE!



AGGGHHH! FAFNIR'S BLOOD-- I'VE SWALLOWED IT! IT SEIZES MY THROAT LIKE A THING ALIVE-- CHOKING ME-- AKKK... I CANNOT BREATHE. CURSE YOU, SIEGFRIED...



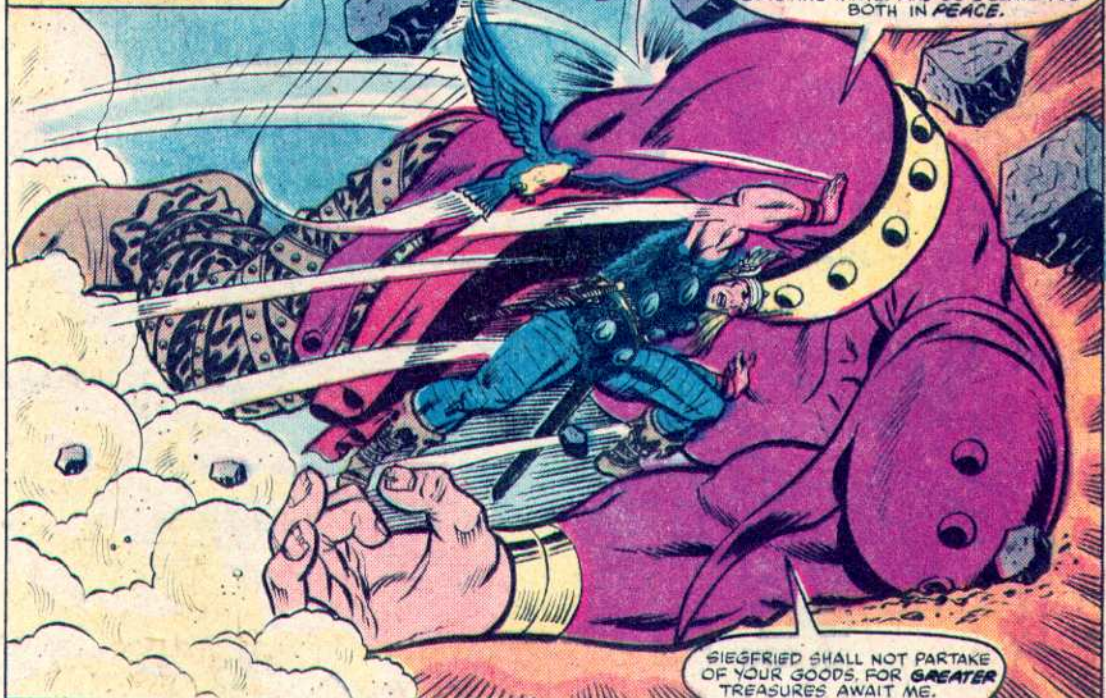
...CCCUU-
UUURRRR-
SSSSSSSE
YOOOUU-
UUUU...

HE DIES, POISONED BY THE VERY SUBSTANCE WHICH DID SPARK MY STRANGE AWARENESS AND THUS DID SAVE ME FROM THE ABYSS.



AND NOW SHALL I CLOSE THE HATE-CAVERN FOR-
EVER SEALING INSIDE--
MIME... WHO SOUGHT
THE GOLD WITH
RESOLUTE CRAFT...
AND I MAKE THE
CARCASS OF FAFNIR
GUARDIAN ETERNAL
OF HIS FAVORED
HOARD.

MOMENTS LATER, SIEGFRIED HEFTS HIS HUGE BURDEN INTO THE CAVE ENTRANCE, AFTER PLACING THE BODY OF THE DWARF WITHIN.



HERE SHALL YOU LIE, MY DRAGON FOE. TAKE CARE OF THE SACRED TREASURE-- SHARE IN ITS WATCH WITH YOUR BOOTY-COVETING MATE, AND SO I LEAVE YOU BOTH IN PEACE.

SIEGFRIED SHALL NOT PARTAKE OF YOUR GOODS. FOR GREATER TREASURES AWAIT ME.

MY TASK ACCOMPLISHED--AND AGAIN THE BIRLING APPROACHES. HEARREN, WINGED ONE... MY MOTHER DIED, MY FATHER FELL-- UNKNOWN BY THEIR SON. MY ONLY FRIEND WAS A VILLAINOUS DWARF AND I WAS FORCED TO DELIVER HIM TO DEATH.

TELL ME NOW, COULD YOU FIND A LOVING FRIEND FOR ME? I HAVE OFTEN CALLED AND YET NO ONE HAS COME. YOU, MY FAITHFUL, SURELY YOU COULD FIND ONE... YOU COUNSEL ME SO WELL. NOW SING, I'LL LISTEN TO YOUR SONG.



YOU SPEAK OF A WONDERFUL WOMAN WHO SLEEPS SURROUNDED BY FIRE, HIGH ON A MOUNTAIN OF ROCK. AND HE WHO STEPS THROUGH THE FLAMES, WAKENS THE BEAUTIFUL BRUNNHILDA.

BUT HE WHO WINS THE PRIDE, LACKING IN FEAR MUST HE BE, AND... THAT IS I. THIS DAY I TOILED TO LEARN FEAR, BUT IN VAIN, I'M BURNING WITH JOY NOW TO LEARN IT FROM THE FAIR BRUNNHILDA.

NOT FAR AWAY, SITS THE PRIME MOVER OF THESE AWESOME EVENTS-- ODIN, LORD OF ASGARD, WHO HAS COME TO EARTH AS THE WANDERER TO OBSERVE.



HE RESTS QUIETLY, WHILE THOUGHTS ONLY A GOD MAY KNOW DRIET THROUGH HIS BRAIN.

BUT TO THE CASUAL WATCHER... HE SEEMS BUT AN AGED MORTAL DOZING PEACEFULLY.



IT IS AS HE WISHES.

I SEE THAT SIEGFRIED COMES. NOW SHALL THIS WORLD-SPANNING TAPESTRY HAVE FURTHER STRANDS WOVEN THROUGH ITS FABRIC.



OLD MAN-- AWAKEN! YOUR MASSIVE BULK BLOCKS THE PATHWAY UP YON MOUNTAIN WHICH LEADS TO THE MAID ON THE ROCKS.



THE WAY THE WOOD BIRD HAS SHOWN YOU-- YOU SHALL NOT TAKE! I RISE TO PREVENT IT!

OLD FOOL, I'VE NO TIME FOR PRATTING. OUT OF MY WAY OR FACE THE SLASHING STEEL OF NEEDFUL!





WHO ARE YOU, OLD MAN, THAT YOU WOULD DARE BAR MY PATH? **SPEAK** OR I'LL SLAY YOU WHERE YOU STAND!

THE SLEEPING MAID OF THE ROCK IS CHAINED BY MY MIGHT. HE WHO WOULD WAKE HER MUST WALK THROUGH FLAMES TO HER.

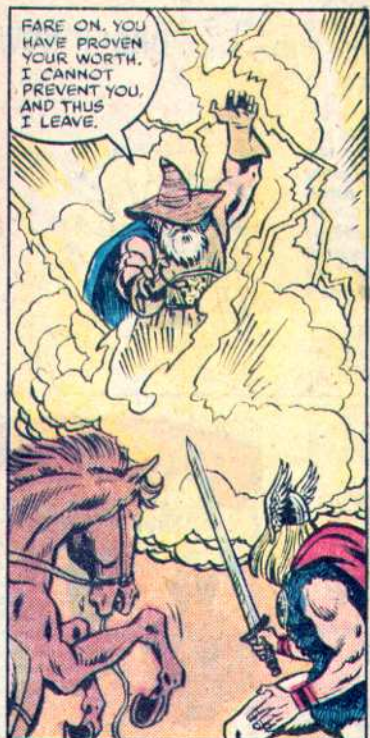
THAT FLAMING SEA CAN SEIZE AND DEVOUR YOU. GO **BACK**, FOOL-HARDY BOY! GO **BACK**!

I SHALL HINDER YOUR WAY, FOR STILL DO I HOLD THE MIGHTY **SPEAR** UPON WHICH THE SWORD YOU SWING ONCE BROKE IN BATTLE. ONCE AGAIN, LET IT SPLINTER UPON THIS SPEAR.



SO YOU ARE MY FATHER'S **FOE** WHO SLEW HIM IN THE PAST AFTER HE SHATTERED **NEEDFUL** UPON YOUR CURSED STICK, BUT I AM FAR MIGHTIER THAN HE-- AND I SHALL PREVAIL!

BRACH!



FARE ON, YOU HAVE PROVEN YOUR WORTH. I CANNOT PREVENT YOU, AND THUS I LEAVE.



HOW QUICKLY HE FLEES WHEN HIS SPEAR IS **BROKEN**! HOW SWEET THE VENGEANCE THAT COMES MY WAY.



E'EN THIS FAR DOWN THE MOUNTAIN, I CAN FEEL THE SEARING HEAT FROM THE FLAMES ABOVE, BUT I'LL BATHE IN THE FIRE... I'LL GO THROUGH WHATEVER FLAMES TO REACH MY **BRIDE**!

BRUNNHILDA! TAKE HEED... YOUR SAVIOR IS UPON YOU! **SIEGFRIED** COMES!

SIEGFRIED'S STEELY FINGERS GRASP THE SLIGHT OUTCROPPINGS OF ROCK AS HIS POWERFUL LEGS PROPEL HIM SWIFTLY UP THE MOUNTAINSIDE...



HE ASCENDS TOWARDS THE CIRCLE OF FLAME WHICH RINGS THE UPPERMOST PORTION OF THE CLIFF.



HIS LIMBS WEAKEN UNDER THE DEBILITATING WAVES OF HEAT THAT BUFFT HIM MERCILESSLY-- THREATENING HIS PROGRESS.

BUT HE CONTINUES INCH BY AGONIZING INCH UNTIL HE REACHES THE VERY HEART OF THE INFERNO WHERE THE ROAR OF THE BLAZE BECOMES DEAFENING



THE FIRE IS ALL--ALL-EMBRACING... ALL-CONSUMING.



BUT THOUGH THE DRAGON-SLAYER FLINCHES IN SEARING PAIN-- NOT FOR AN INSTANT DOES HE KNOW THE FATAL TOUCH OF FEAR.

HE WRAPS HIS HARD-WON CLOAK ABOUT HIS MAMMOTH FRAME TO SHIELD HIM FROM THE SCORCHING FURNACE.



HIS JAW SET AS IF CHISELED FROM STONE... SIEGFRIED PASSES ON. HIS EYES BLAZE NO LESS BRIGHTLY THAN THE FIRE THAT SURROUNDS HIM-- AT HIS FIRST GLIMPSE OF THE SUMMIT HE HAS COME TO ATTAIN.



HIS FLESH IS DRENCHED WITH SWEAT. MOISTURE THAT MAKES SLIPPERY THE HAND-HOLDS HE SEEKS WITH ACHING, TORN FINGERS.

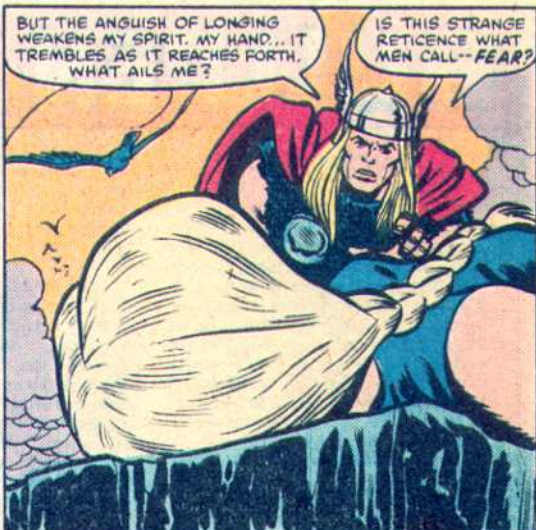


AND THEN AT LAST, AFTER AN ETERNITY OF STRIVING AND SUFFERING, SIEGFRIED PLACES A BLOODED HAND OVER THE MOUNTAINTOP... AND LIKE A MAN REBORN, HE SUDDENLY FEELS THE PAIN AND FATIGUE LIFTED FROM HIM LIKE A GREAT WEIGHT.



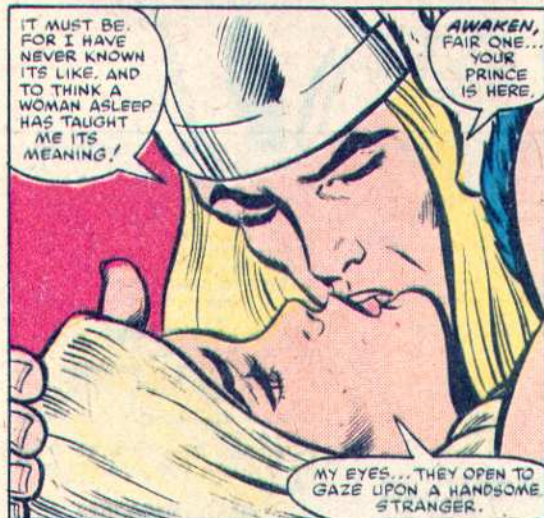


AHH... AS THE BIRD DID SPEAK TO ME IN SONG... THERE BRUNNHILDA LAY RADIANT IN REPOSE... AWAITING BUT MY KISS TO AWAKEN HER. I WILL FINALLY KNOW TRUE COMPANIONSHIP.



BUT THE ANGUISH OF LONGING WEAKENS MY SPIRIT. MY HAND... IT TREMBLES AS IT REACHES FORTH. WHAT AILS ME?

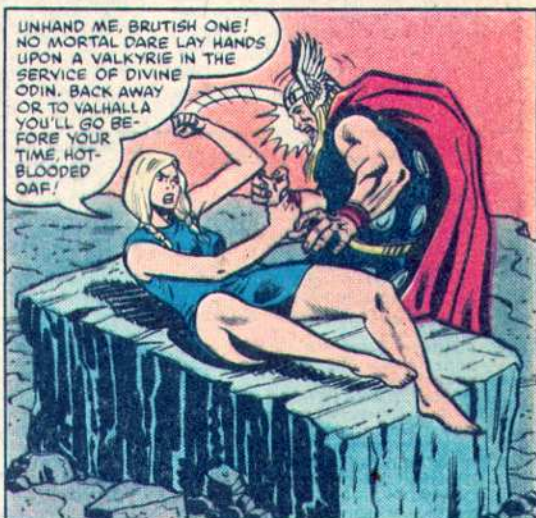
IS THIS STRANGE RETICENCE WHAT MEN CALL-- FEAR?



IT MUST BE. FOR I HAVE NEVER KNOWN ITS LIKE, AND TO THINK A WOMAN ASLEEP HAS TAUGHT ME ITS MEANING!

AWAKEN, FAIR ONE... YOUR PRINCE IS HERE.

MY EYES... THEY OPEN TO GAZE UPON A HANDSOME STRANGER.



UNHAND ME, BRUTISH ONE! NO MORTAL DARE LAY HANDS UPON A VALKYRIE IN THE SERVICE OF DIVINE ODIN. BACK AWAY OR TO VALHALLA YOU'LL GO BEFORE YOUR TIME. HOT-BLOODED QAF!



BRUNNHILDA! WHY DO YOU STRIKE AT ONE WHO HAS RESCUED YOU FROM AN ENDLESS SLEEP? I SEEK ONLY YOUR LOVE... WHY OFFER YOUR ENMITY?


Y-YOU ARE RIGHT. I DID FORGET THAT I AM GODDESS... A GATHERER OF SOULS, NO LONGER, ODIN DID STRIP ME OF THAT WHEN I DISOBEYED HIS COMMANDS.

AND HE PLACED ME ATOP THIS LONELY ALP IN A DEATH-LIKE SLUMBER UNTIL ONE SPECIAL MAN WOULD COME TO AWAKEN ME.




HE WOULD BE BOLD AND WORTHY OF A MAIDEN'S LOVE, SAID ODIN, FOR ONLY SUCH A MAN COULD REACH HERE. AND I WOULD DESIRE HIM ONCE I SET EYES UPON HIM.

LOOK AT ME BRUNNHILDA. I AM HE OF WHOM THIS ODIN DID SPEAK. FOR I HAVE BREACHED THE WALL OF FLAMES TO CLAIM YOU AS MY OWN.



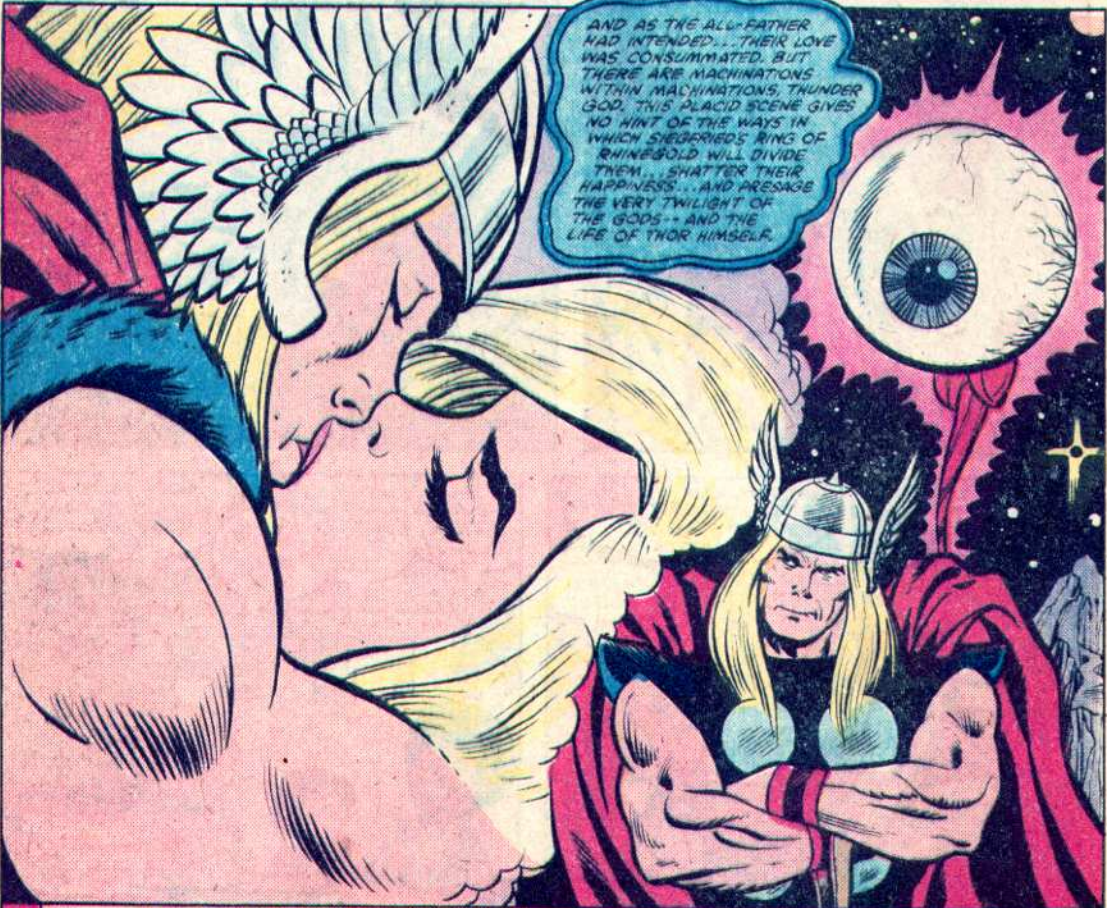
IT WAS SIEGFRIED WHO BROKE THE SPELL PLACED OVER YOU. AND GLADLY WOULD I HAVE FACED A THOUSAND FIRES... A THOUSAND FOES TO BE NEAR YOU FOR AN INSTANT, MAIDEN... I LOVE YOU-- TRULY I LOVE YOU.

AND I-- YOU, BRAVE ONE.



ODIN IN HIS WISDOM SENT YOU TO ME, AND THOUGH I HAVE LOST THE LIFE I KNEW AS ONE OF THOSE MOST IN HIS FAVOR... I HAVE FOUND SOMETHING THAT MORE THAN EQUALS THE LOSS-- YOU!

THEN WE ARE ONE, AND BECAUSE OF YOU, SWEET BRUNNHILDA-- I HAVE BECOME THE WARRIOR THAT IT WAS DESTINED I BE.



AND AS THE ALL-FATHER HAD INTENDED... THEIR LOVE WAS CONSUMMATED. BUT THERE ARE MACHINATIONS WITHIN MACHINATIONS, THUNDER GOD. THIS PLACID SCENE GIVES NO HINT OF THE WAYS IN WHICH SIEGFRIED'S RING OF RHINEGOLD WILL DIVIDE THEM... SHATTER THEIR HAPPINESS... AND PRESAGE THE VERY TWILIGHT OF THE GODS-- AND THE LIFE OF THOR HIMSELF.

THE PENULTIMATE CHAPTER IN THE RING SAGA--

PASSIONS AND POTIONS!

DMZ

Dear Roy,

THOR #293 may well be the most unusual comic I have ever read. It is certainly among the best. In essence, it consisted of... flashbacks told backward? An editorial footnote that took up a whole issue, so intricate in its explanation that it required pictures to illustrate it? A study in the integrity maintenance procedure of literature? Or just a whole lot of fun? Obviously, it's all of the above and a whole lot more. I loved it.

Jim Planck

Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

Roy and Keith thank you, Jim. It was not without a fair amount of trepidation that they embarked upon this phase of The Celestials Saga. And, while most of you out there applauded the brave new vistas they unveiled, there was a detractor or two. For instance...

Dear Roy and Mark,

I have just finished reading THOR #293, "The Twilight of Some Gods," and feel I must tell you that you have just committed one of the cardinal sins of comic story-telling, a sin which Marvel has remained blissfully free of — until now. This sin is "hair-splitting" or "needlessly complicating the issue." Of losing the direct simplicity that is the mark of great work. Your competitors fell prey to this sin with its multiple-Earth scenario which has served only to confuse readers and to complicate plots.

Well, if I understand what you are doing correctly (although the full explanation is still forthcoming), you are following the theory expressed in the fanzine *Omniverse* that the Asgardians of Marvel are NOT the Aesir of myths. That there were in fact two Asgards. I am tempted to scream. One reason I like the THOR mag is that I like mythology. Not all, but a major portion of it. Granted, the difference between the Thor of myth and the Thor of Lee/Kirby were many, but it has been fun, recently, to see you attempt a greater cohesion between the two — letting Odin lose his eye, near-killing off Balder, introducing the Vanir, etc. I never thought the comic Thor should be *exactly* like the mythological Thor (the original was too dull-witted and boastful to make a good comicbook hero) but what moves could be made to reconcile the two without sacrificing saleability were appreciated.

That is why this issue is so disappointing. If our Thor is not the REAL Thor — the original Thor of myths — much of my interest in him is gone. If this is not the guy worshipped in the myths, he is as little a true "mythological" god as Kirby's New Gods. I despise the whole idea of demysticizing our Thor.

(And if our comicbook Odin was "reborn" only two thousand years ago, then what in the world was our Thor doing in Troy three thousand years ago?)

Finally, the idea that the Ragnarok of the first Asgard coincided with the Star of Bethlehem is slightly offensive. I don't think that comics is a good forum to discuss "living" religions, or even to more than passing references to them. Dead mythologies are one thing, living beliefs are another. All around, THOR #293 was a horrible issue.

Al Schroeder III
Nashville, TN 37205

Well, we can't accuse you of mincing words, can we, Al? Hopefully, you have read the continuation of the tale in THOR #294, so you can at least see the relevance that Old Asgard has in the scheme of things (significantly, that the old Thor's hammer was transmogrified into the coveted Rhinegold). As for your contention that we've been needlessly hair-splitting by introducing the Elder Asgard, there has long been a clamor among you THOR readers to account for the discrepancies between the myths and the Marvel version. Since the actual myths describe the transformation/rebirth of Asgard, why not use that as the basis for the explanation? This way seems to us a lot better than producing some totally arbitrary sort of explanation out of the hat, such as there being a special element in everyone's eyeglasses that makes our Thor appear different than the myths or some such nonsense. No, our Thor is not the mythological Thor, but that makes him no less *real*. He is the sole and rightful heir to that persona, and he himself probably was worshipped by the Vikings in their heyday after 1 A.D. We do agree that comics are not the best place to discuss

personal beliefs like religion, but one man's myths are another man's religion, and the distinction may be subtler than you think. The inclusion of the Nativity scene was meant only to provoke thought, not to make any particular statement. Witness the next correspondent's interpretation...

Dear Roy and company,

I've been following the current Thor-Eternals storyline with the feverish intensity akin to that of an addict. I keep wondering how it is all going to end up and yet each issue we are bombarded with more sub-plots! I am praying that you guys do get around to answering some if not all of the questions you've raised. Such as: Why was Balder sacrificed to save Asgard? 2) Who is Thor's mother anyway? 3) What was the pact that Odin made with the Celestials? 4) Who are the supposed creators of mankind? (Personally, I feel you're going to stick with the space gods' version, but I hope you can reconcile the Norse and Greek myths of creation, too.)

As for the current issue #293, it was not only superb, it was surprisingly true to Norse mythology. Having read "Mythology of All Races," by John A. MacCulloch, I can say with absolute certainty that you depicted Ragnarok exactly as described in the poems of Snorri Sturluson. For those readers who might have been shocked by the last page's depiction of the Nativity, I need only quote the last stanza of Sturluson's *Hyndluljod*:

"There comes another, a mightier one
Yet dare I never his name foretell
Few are those who can further see
Than when Odin shall meet the wolf."

There are scholars who believe the "mightier one" referred to the coming of Christianity and the supplanting of the older Norse beliefs.

Mike Mammo

Marietta, OH 45750

Thanks for writing, Mike. That interpretation seems valid to us, although it's not necessarily our own. As we mentioned earlier, we're here to provoke a few thoughts in between the lines and images, not to peddle doctrine. As we need not remind too many of you, the *Marvel Universe* is a fictional place, where gods of myth are physically real beings, not intangible concepts as they would appear to be in our world. The relevance of what we depict in our four-color funnies to the real world is up for you readers to decide. As for your questions, Mike, worry not — we're working on them!

Dear Roy,

In THOR #293, you explain that the Old Asgard of VIII, Ve, Magni, Modi, etc., shot the works around the time of the birth of Christ, which, according to whom you ask, took place from 7 B.C. to 10 A.D. Now I don't pretend to know that much about Homeric legend, but the Trojan War (depicted in THOR ANNUAL #8) must have occurred considerably before this time. (The Trojan War is historically dated around 1200 B.C. — mg) So I now pose the question, "How could the Thor we know have fought Zeus and the Greeks in the Trojan War if he had not yet been born?" My first thought was that Thor accidentally travelled back through time. And yet Zeus does recognize him as a "scion of Asgard". How could he know this if the Old Asgard was still in existence? Could Zeus have recognized him as a future Thor? If so, it seems Zeus know a lot more about the god-cycle than anyone suspects. I'd like to hear your thoughts on the matter.

Robert Chishold
Readville, MA

Well, Robert, your first thought was right. Thor had indeed found himself in another age when he emerged from the cavern of mists in THOR ANNUAL #8. Recall the exchange between Thor and Zeus on page 22: "Best thou should return to thine own time and place." "Time? Then I was ripped untimely from mine own era, as I did suspect." Doubtlessly, this would account for Thor's various other ancient escapades. As for Zeus' knowledge of the Thor-to-be, some accounts do credit the sky-lord with oracular resources. Keep reading, pal — THOR #300 is going to answer a rainbow's worth of questions for all you Marvelous mythologists.

— Mark Gruenwald