



A **52-PAGE** THEME
ISSUE
FEATURING **THE
MIGHTY THOR!!!**

AN UNPUBLISHED
KIRBY INTERVIEW

AN INTERVIEW WITH
CLASSIC KIRBY INKER
CHIC STONE

**JOURNEY INTO
MYSTERY #101**
BEFORE INKING

THE EVOLUTION OF
**THOR & THE
STONE MEN**

WALT SIMONSON
ON *MANHUNTER*,
THOR & KIRBY

EXAMINING THE
REAL NORSE GODS

PROS & CONS OF
VINCE COLLETTA

LINKING *THOR* TO
THE NEW GODS

UNPUBLISHED ART
INCLUDING JACK'S
THOR PENCILS
BEFORE THEY WERE
INKED, AND *MUCH
MORE!!*



FULLY
AUTHORIZED
BY THE
KIRBY
ESTATE

THE JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR

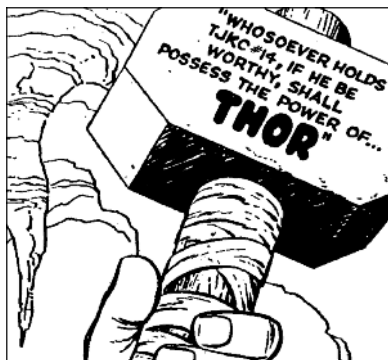
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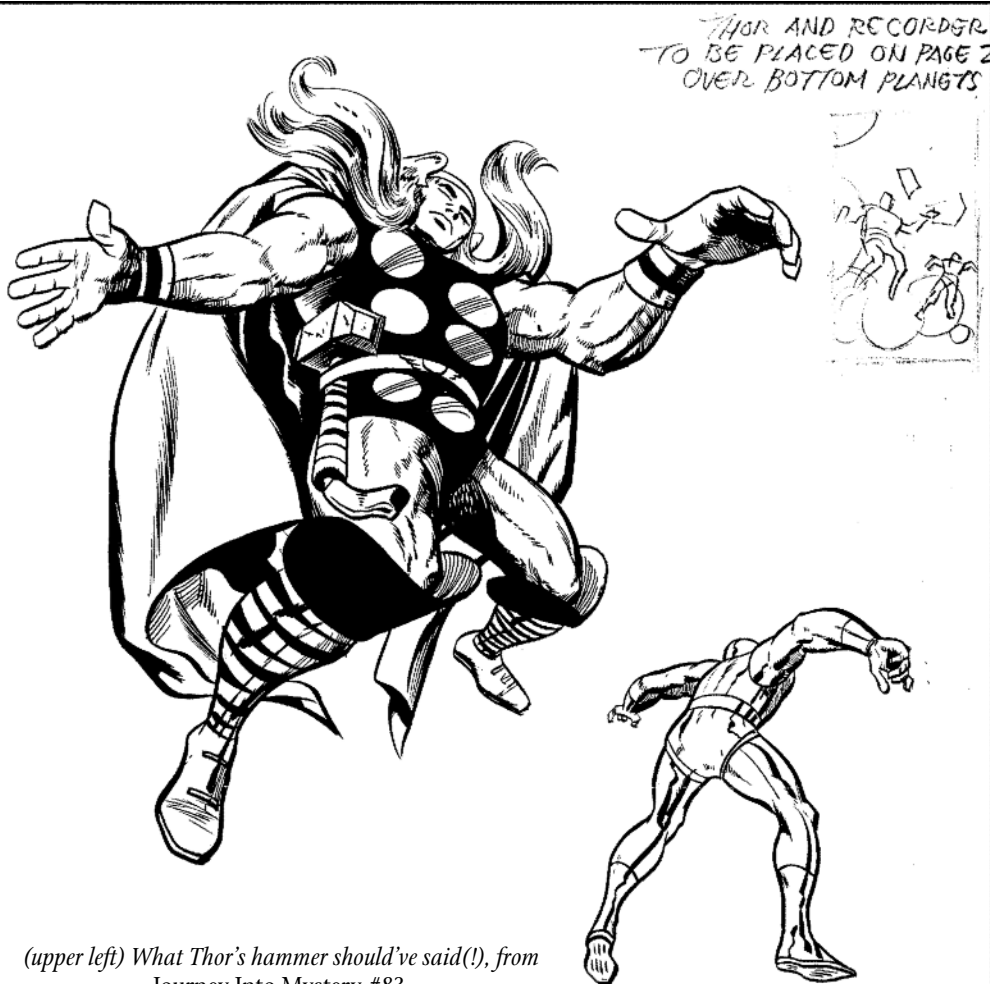
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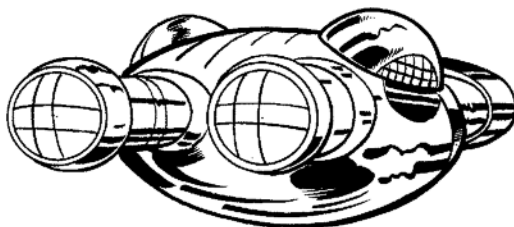
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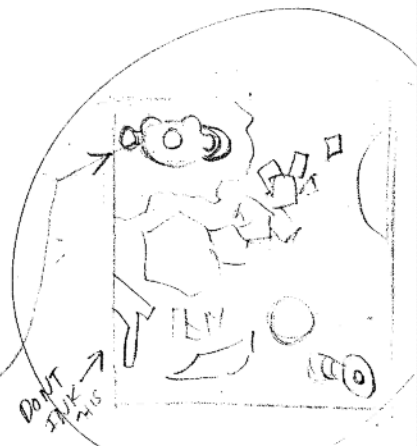


(upper left) What Thor's hammer should've said(!), from Journey Into Mystery #83.

(center) Artwork that Jack created to accompany his collage for the page 2-3 spread in Thor #161.



LANDING SPACE-SHIP
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PAGE 3



The Jack Kirby Collector, Vol. 4, No. 14, Feb. 1997. Published bi-monthly by and © TwoMorrows Advertising, 502 Saint Mary's St., Raleigh, NC 27605, USA. 919-833-8092. John Morrow, Editor. Pamela Morrow, Assistant Editor. Single issues: \$4.95 US, \$5.40 Canada, \$7.40 outside North America. Six-issue subscriptions: \$24.00 US, \$32.00 Canada and Mexico, \$44.00 outside North America. First printing. All characters are © their respective companies. All artwork is © Jack Kirby unless otherwise noted. All editorial matter is © the respective authors. PRINTED IN CANADA.

THE JOURNEY COSMIC

An overview of the Kirby run on Thor, by David Peñalosa

After the *Fantastic Four*, the longest consistent run Jack Kirby ever did was *Thor*. To this day, Jack's work on *Thor* remains one of the most inspired creations in the realm of comic books.

Jack's *Thor* premiered in *Journey Into Mystery* #83 (Aug. 1962), inked by Joe Sinnott. Early on we were introduced to the supporting cast of characters: Thor's alter-ego, the lame Dr. Don Blake; his nurse Jane Foster; and some rather unusual folks: Thor's step-brother, the evil Loki; his father Odin, the ruler of the Norse Gods; and a growing cast of other immortal Asgardians.

Thor was a ground-breaking work. However, the title didn't start out as much more than a typical Marvel superhero book, unique only in the above-mentioned supporting cast. Written in the classic Stan Lee soap-operatic style, many stories played off the fact that Don Blake and Jane Foster loved one another, but were afraid to tell each other. This tension served the storylines well until Thor's adventures started taking on more magnificent dimensions. The early Kirby/Ayers artwork was certainly well done, but other artists like Don Heck and Joe Sinnott started doing the penciling chores, and Stan Lee gave the writing over to his brother Larry Leiber. The book floundered for awhile with weak stories and less-than-stunning art until the Kirby/Lee team permanently returned with #101 (Feb. 1964).

The first clue to the coming greatness that would be associated with the magazine actually occurred with the introduction of Tales of Asgard in issue #97 (Oct. 1963). These five-page episodes in the back of the book began by retelling Norse myths, and gradually evolved to where Jack was spinning his own myths, with some stories spanning many issues. None of the stories took place on Earth. Sif, the goddess and future lover of Thor, first appeared in Tales of Asgard (JIM #102), Balder the Brave in issue #106, and The Warriors Three—Hogun the Grim, Fandral the Dashing and Volstagg the Voluminous—in issue #119. All these supporting characters soon began appearing in the modern-day *Thor* stories with greater frequency.

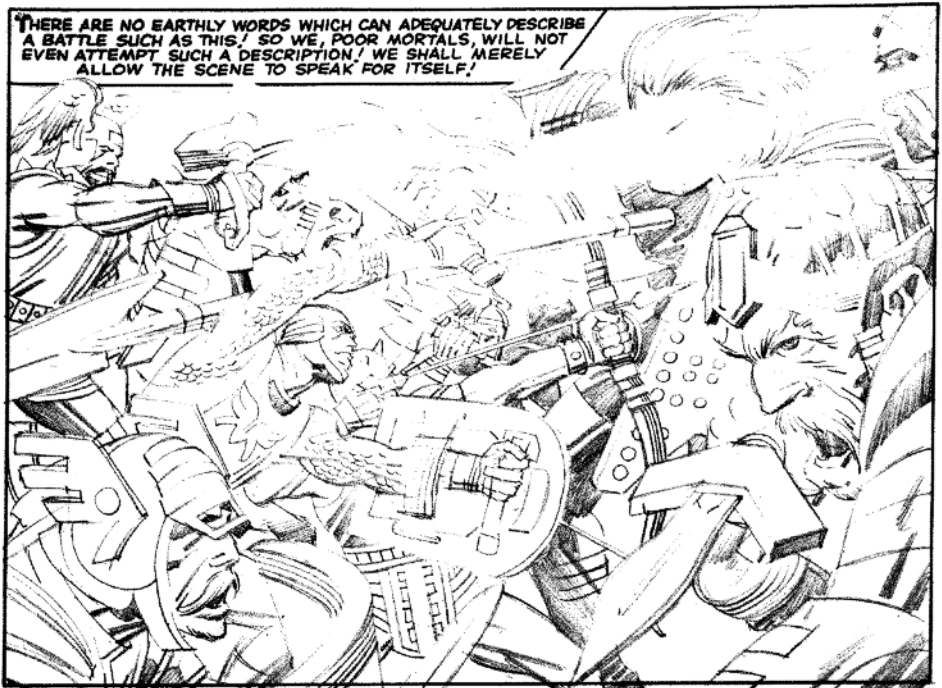
Vince Colletta began inking Jack's pencils with the Tales of Asgard back-up in *Thor* #106 and graduated to the lead feature with #116, staying for almost the entirety of Jack's run. (I am one of those perhaps-rare people who enjoyed Colletta's inks on Jack's pencils, but don't hold that against me.)

Jack Kirby had been the workhorse of the new upstart company Marvel, drawing a record amount of stories, covers and layouts. The Kirby look was the Marvel look. In the mid-sixties when his monthly workload lightened to just the two full titles of *Thor* and *Fantastic Four* and the half-book length Captain America feature in *Tales of Suspense*, Jack's creativity took a quantum leap. After spending over twenty years steadily working in the field, Jack reached an unprecedented level of creativity in which he plotted and drew stories that were seemingly never-ending, magnificent epics.

The great Kirby explosion of creativity in *Thor* occurred roughly within a fifty-six issue run: #114 (March 1965) to #169 (October 1969). The first story (or sub-plot of the epic) featured the Absorbing Man

(#114-115), who turned into a rather ultimate supervillain who could absorb the elements of the Earth and Thor's superpowers. Loki and Balder figured prominently in the story. When Loki brought Jane Foster to Asgard against her will, Odin became angered, not knowing whether to blame Thor or Loki. (One had to wonder, if Odin was so "all-knowing", why didn't he catch on that Thor was telling the truth and Loki was lying in these incidents? Oh well.) Odin called for a trial.

"Trial of the Gods" (#116) had an awesome cover with Thor and Loki standing before Odin sitting on his throne. Inside, Jack drew fantastic scenes of the mythological lands of Asgard and beyond. The trial consisted of a challenging journey through terrifying terrain filled with all kinds of menaces, such as Yagg the Slayer. While Thor had his hands full, Loki convinced the Executioner and Enchantress to travel to Earth and kidnap Jane Foster. Balder had to rescue Jane in Thor's stead. Loki, as mischievous as ever, used enchanted Norn Stones (on loan from the Norn Queen) to cheat during the trial, resulting in victory over Thor. Just as Loki beat Thor back to Asgard, he sent the enchanted stones



TO FOES SUCH AS THESE-- IN A CONFLICT SUCH AS THIS-- TIME HAS LITTLE OR NO MEANING! IT MIGHT BE MINUTES, HOURS, OR DAYS-- BUT FINALLY, THE COURAGE AND THE SKILL OF ODIN'S LEGIONS SERVE TO DRIVE BACK LAUFEY'S BEATEN WARRIORS, IN ONE OF THE GREATEST VICTORIES IN THE ANNALS OF ASGARD!

FLY! WE CAN FIGHT NO LONGER! THE CAUSE IS LOST! ODIN HAS TRIUMPHED AGAIN!

NO! I ORDER DEATH TO THOSE WHO SURRENDER! WE SHALL REGROUP AT MY CASTLE, AND ATTACK AGAIN-- WHEN THEY LEAST SUSPECT IT!

BUT ODIN, EVER VIGILANT, EVER OMNIPOTENT, HAS HEARD LAUFEY'S DESPERATE CRY, AND SO A NEW ORDER IS ISSUED BY THE MIGHTY MONARCH....

AFTER THEM! THE REIGN OF LAUFEY MUST BE ENDED FOREVER! SO LONG AS HE IS KING OF JOTUNHEIM, OUR VICTORY WILL NEVER BE COMPLETE!



A sign of great things to come: Early Tales of Asgard pencils from Journey Into Mystery #112.

"REAL" TALES OF ASGARD

or "Gimme That Old Norse Religion", by Jon B. Cooke

It took some time for Kirby & Lee to fully exploit the mythological aspects of Thor in the pages of *Journey Into Mystery*. Initially, the god of thunder's chief concern seemed to be magicians and Communists, but it was the repeated appearance of his greatest adversary, Loki, that signaled the team's increasing interest in exploring the Viking myths. Let's examine a few of the Norse myths that Jack and Stan "Marvelized"; the "true" Tales of Asgard, found in ancient tomes called the Eddas, dating back to the first millennium. [Most of the following quotes are from "Gods of the North" by Brian Branston (1956, Vanguard Press) including his translations of the Prose and Poetic Eddas, and from Nicole Cherry's great Norse mythology web page.]

In the beginning there was the Ginnungagap, the Yawning Gulf. In the Gulf was a land of fire, Muspellheim, and a land of ice, Niflheim. From the icy waves rose the first living creature, Ymir the Frost Giant, who "was no god but a creature of evil." Auoumla, the cow, sustained the Giant, and licked the rocks of ice to create Buri, a god who "begat a son called Bur who took to wife Bestla... and they had three sons called Odin, Villi and Vé." The boys killed Ymir, and threw his carcass into the Yawning Gulf and made the earth out of it. From his blood they created the lakes and seas; the earth was made from his flesh and the mountain crags from his bones. Towards the center of the earth they built a fortress encircling the region against their giant enemies; they made it from the brows of Ymir, and called it Midgard. (The brothers also created humanity from two logs of driftwood, but that's another story.) So were created the nine worlds of Norse mythology, three of which concern us: the outer world Jotunheim (Land of the Giants), Midgard (the human world), and Asgard, Home of the Gods, connected to Man by Bifrost, the Rainbow Bridge.

Contrary to the interests of comics fans, much of Norse religion lacks a cohesive continuity. As stated above, there was a void at the beginning of time and suddenly a giant, divine bovine appeared with no explanation. These tales didn't appeal to logic; apparently it was also a religion in constant flux. Tyr, the Norse God of War who demanded sacrifices from his followers, was wildly popular until Thor—who apparently desired no such bloody compensation—usurped his position over the years and surpassed even Odin in popularity. What is recounted about the immortals—at least what would interest a fan of the Kirby & Lee *Thor*—is briefly summarized below.

ODIN: The chief god of the Norse pantheon, Odin is called Alfadir (All-father), for he is indeed father of the gods Balder, Hermod, Hod, Thor, and Vidar. Odin is a god of war and death, but also the god of poetry and wisdom. From his throne he observes all that happens in the nine worlds; tidings are brought to him by his two ravens, Huginn

and Muninn. He also resides in Valhalla, where slain warriors are taken. Odin has only one eye, which shines like the sun; his other eye he traded for a drink from the Well of Wisdom, and gained immense knowledge.

THOR: The son of Odin and Jord, he's one of the most powerful gods, the Norse god of thunder. He is married to Sif, a fertility goddess, and is usually portrayed as a large, powerful man with a red beard and eyes of lightning. Despite his ferocious appearance, he was very popular as the protector of both gods and humans against the forces of evil. Thursday is named after him. The Norse believed that during a thunderstorm, Thor rode through the heavens on his chariot pulled by goats. Thor wears the belt Megingjard which doubles his already considerable strength. His greatest enemy is Jormungand, the Midgard Serpent, and his greatest weapon, Mjollnir, the hammer ("that smashes") made for him by dwarfs. Every time Thor threw Mjollnir, lightning flashed, after which the



MANGOGG FACES THOR AFTER THOR BROKE MOUNTAINS TO LET SEA IN TO FLOOD LAND-- NOTHING - NO FORCE OF NATURE CAN STOP ME



Journey Into Mystery #83; definitely NOT Thor's first appearance.

THE EVOLUTION OF THOR & THE STONE MEN

by Richard Kolkman (with thanks to John Modica and Mark Evanier)

To Marvelites, the origin and first appearance of Thor in *Journey Into Mystery* #83 (August 1962) is as familiar as the FF's cosmic rocket hop. Feeble Don Blake discovers Thor's hammer in the guise of an old stick. Upon striking the stick, he becomes Thor, god of thunder. With his hammer, Thor shatters a tree, commands the elements, and routs a rowdy band of Saturnian Stone Men from Earth. "Thor the Mighty! And the Stone Men from Saturn!" begins the saga of Thor and Asgard, which under Kirby's pencil developed into a stunning cosmic masterpiece. Of course, the original concept for Thor can be found in many mythological texts; but Jack's re-invention of Thor as a heroic figure in our popular culture can be traced back to DC's *Adventure Comics* #75 (May 1942; reprinted in *Forever People* #6).

The "first" Thor faces off against the Sandman and Sandy in Simon & Kirby's "Villain from Valhalla" and follows basic precepts from the Norse legends. Thor has command of both his hammer (Mjolnir) and the elements. The appearance of this red-haired ruffian includes a winged helmet

COMMANDOS IN VALHALLA

by Rich Morrissey

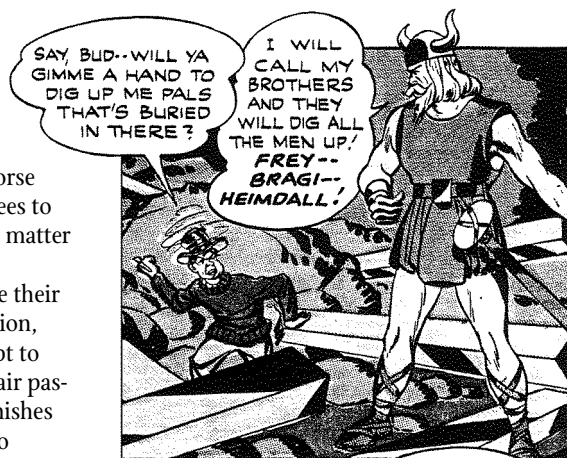
In "The Shadow of Valhalla", the third and last story in *Boy Commandos* #7 (Summer 1944), the Commandos are assigned to search the old Asgard Castle in Norway for Nazi equipment. They find not only the war material but the Nazis themselves, and in the ensuing battle Brooklyn is knocked out. He awakens to find an immense figure in Viking garb standing over him. It's Thor, depicted in his traditional manner with red hair and a long beard, and he brings the combatants before the throne of his father Odin (who

looks much as he later would at Marvel, with a long white beard and two functioning eyes). The Nazis claim that the gods should be on the side of their sometime-worshipper Hitler, although Thor comments that "Valhalla is the Norse heaven... not German!" Still, Odin agrees to have the men from the future settle the matter by one-on-one combat.

The Commandos naturally choose their adult leader Rip Carter as their champion, and Rip wins despite the Nazis' attempt to cheat. Odin grants the Commandos "fair passage back to the world of life", and banishes the Nazis "to the world of darkness", to which Thor dispatches them with his hammer. Odin has a feast brought for Rip and the boys, and Thor sends them through a wall he says will provide a passage to a ship and food...

upon which Brooklyn wakes up to find himself surrounded by his comrades, and the Nazis dead. They conclude it was all Brooklyn's dream, and besides, they have more serious things to think about; the explosion sealed the exits to the castle, and their ship is departing without them. In desperation, Brooklyn gets them to push on the wall Thor had shown him... and it opens, leading to an ancient Viking ship stocked with nonperishable provisions! Rip insists it was all coincidence, but Brooklyn still isn't sure: "Well, ya at least gotta admit dat even when I sleep, I'm lookin' out for de interests of da Commandos!"

A classic sequence providing another early example of Kirby's work on Thor? Sadly, no. Close scrutiny proves it to be the work of writer Don Cameron and



artist Louis Cazeneuve, both of whom worked regularly on the series after Kirby had joined the war effort. Even so, the story is signed by Simon & Kirby (not all *BC* stories were), perhaps indicating that their studio had at least something to do with it... very possibly it was indeed Jack Kirby—whose interest in Thor is well documented—who provided the plot.

In any case, the story makes an observation sorely needed in World War II or in any day—that heroic gods like Thor and Odin would ultimately be on the side of justice and fair play, and against a society built on hatred and the strong bullying the weak, as was Nazi Germany. Later in *The Invaders*, Roy Thomas had Thor confront the battle between American ideals and his German worshippers, once again coming to the same conclusion. It was an understandable and fitting extrapolation on Thomas' part of the Marvel god as developed by Jack Kirby... but as with so much in comics, the King himself had already—personally or by proxy—come to the identical conclusion. ▀



Panel from *The Unexpected* #16

and strapped boots. Thor's invincible hammer smashes open a bank vault and destroys a police car. Thor turns out to be "Fairy Tales" Fenton, a metallurgy professor/robber whose invisible bullet-proof suit and electronically charged hammer are ultimately no match for the Sandman and Sandy.

Adventure Comics #75 wasn't the first time Simon and Kirby attempted to fuse mythology into comics; *Blue Bolt* and *Red Raven* had mythological ties. Mercury made his one and only appearance in *Red Raven* #1 and Hurricane (a backup in the first two issues of *Captain America*) was mentioned to be Thor's son. But it isn't until more than 15 years later that Kirby (sans Simon) revisits the Thor concept in DC's *Tales of the Unexpected* #16 (August 1957, reprinted in *DC Special* #4, Sept. 1969). "The Magic Hammer" was likely written by Jack, and features a horn-helmeted Thor, the genuine god of thunder. Even though mere mortals can lift Thor's hammer, it is still a conduit for great power when impacted. The hammer shatters a tree in an impressive show of force, and seems capable of bursting open yet another bank vault. The hammer is virtually identical to the familiar Marvel version. A diminutive proto-Loki

appears here as a sneaky hammer thief. Thor, bearded and caped, has strapped leggings, a large sword and circular designs on his chest.

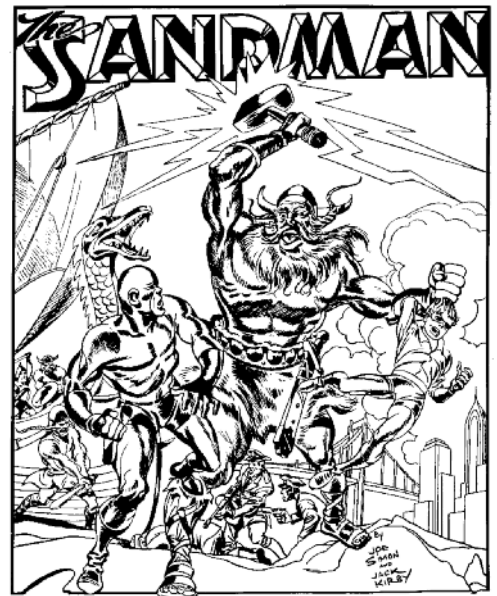
ORIGINS OF THE STONE MEN

Thor wasn't the only concept that got reused in *JIM* #83. The Stone Men from Saturn evolved as well, appearing in no less than four stories before their run-in with the god of thunder.

While still working for DC, Jack introduced the Stone Men in *House of Mystery* #85 (April 1959, reprinted in *DC Special* #11). "The Stone Sentinels of Giant Island" features a band of South Pacific explorers who discover animated Stone Sentinels (buried up to their necks) from another planet. The explorers mention Easter Island twice, and decipher alien hieroglyphics to defeat the Sentinels. An April 1959 comic would probably have had a production date from around October or November of the previous year. An intriguing bit of fact from September 1958 is the publication of the best-selling book "Aku-Aku: The Secret of Easter Island" by Thor Heyerdahl. (A quick history lesson: Easter Island was discovered on Easter day in 1722 in the South Pacific by Dutch seaman Jakob Roggeveen. It is famous for its



The Stone Men from *JIM* #83.



Splash page from *Adventure Comics* #75, Jack's earliest use of the Thor concept.



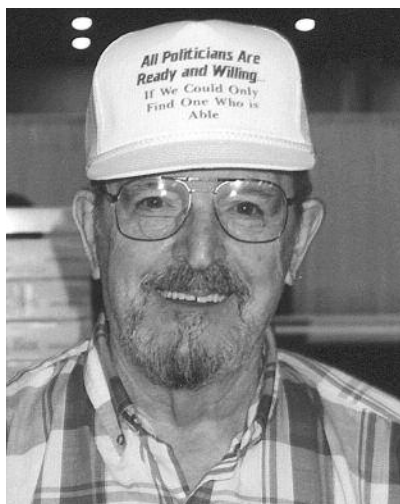
Marvel's first Stone Men from *Tales to Astonish* #5. Was Kirby getting back at DC editor Jack Schiff by reusing the Stone Men idea?



Panel from *Tales of Suspense* #28. These Stone Men got around!



(left) Jack's first take on the Stone Men idea, from DC's *House of Mystery* #85.



CHIC STONE SPEAKS

Interviewed by James Cassara

There are very few comics artists who are able to boast of the credentials that belong to Chic Stone. From his apprenticeship in the late 1930s at the legendary Eisner/Iger studios—where he had the opportunity to learn from the very finest of the first-generation creators—to his work at Timely Comics and beyond, Stone has set consistent standards for excellence and dependability. In the 1960s, having already worked in the industry for nearly two decades, Stone gained prominence as an early architect of The Marvel House Of Ideas.

Working primarily with Jack Kirby, for whose work he still retains an obvious mixture of respect and reverence, Stone inked many of the most famous issues of titles such as Fantastic Four, X-Men, Thor, and perhaps more covers than any other artist of the time. While these credentials are impressive unto themselves, it is evident from speaking with Chic Stone that boasting simply is not within him. One is unlikely to encounter a more humble and gracious individual, the type of gentlemen that often seems the product of a bygone era, but thankfully still exists. He is also, as this interview will attest, a man of conviction and strong opinion.

THE JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR: How about some background info?

You were pretty much there for the early years of the Golden Age.

CHIC STONE: I was born on January 4th, 1923 in New York City, on East 23rd Street and Third Avenue. I studied at the famous School Of Industrial Arts, as well as the Works Projects Administration School. At WPA I studied under the cartoonist Chuck Thorndyke. This was, of course, during the Depression years.

TJKC: Did you always have an eye towards art? How is it you first got into comics?

CHIC: I was an ardent fan of Rube Goldberg, the great artist responsible for all those zany contraptions. At ten years of age, I knew I wanted to be a cartoonist. Like a lot of kids I loved the Sunday pages: Milton Caniff, Brandt, Gus Edson, Raymond Dirks; all were my heroes. I broke into comics in 1939 with the Eisner/Iger studios, a great place to learn. I was only sixteen at the time, [and] did the typical menial tasks: Pasting, whiting out, stuff like that. I helped get the artwork ready for printing.

TJKC: Wasn't Jack Kirby there at the time?

CHIC: No, he came a bit later, in 1940 or 41. I must have just missed him.

TJKC: How familiar were you with his work? Did you see much of the Simon & Kirby stuff?

CHIC: Of course, I knew of it. But to be perfectly honest, I wasn't that impressed with his earlier works. Later, he sure developed his technique and approach to comics. Nobody could possibly ignore the results.

TJKC: After the Golden Age faded, many artists found it difficult to find work. Some dropped out of the field. Did you continue working in comics during this time?

CHIC: During the fifties, I did leave the comic field and became the art director of such magazines as *True Experience*, *The American Salesman*. I even published a magazine, *Boy Illustrated*, which folded after two issues! I also worked for the Gray Advertising Agency, as well as Filmack Studios. At Filmack I did storyboards for television commercials. I later became the art director of *Modern Teen* and *Dig Magazine*. At this time I was living in Hollywood, California.

TJKC: Jumping ahead a bit, let's talk about your earliest work with Jack. Before joining Marvel,

had you inked his work before?

CHIC: No, prior to 1964 I had not worked on Jack's pencils. At Timely Comics I had the wonderful opportunity to embellish the pencils of many great artists, such as Mike Sekowsky, Gene Colan, and Carl Burgos.

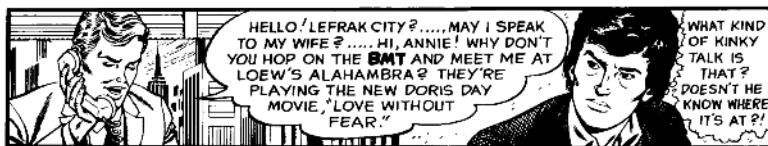
Little did I know I'd soon be given the chance to work with the "supreme master of comic art" Jack Kirby! Just before 1964 I was pounding the pavement, going from one publisher to another, picking up jobs at random. At the time I was penciling *Batman*, and inking *Superman* covers for Mort Weisinger at DC. I happened to walk into the Marvel offices at the time Stan Lee was editing a Kirby pencil job.



Then fortune smiled on them. Eddie was offered a job with

SHOW magazine as assistant trends editor! The money wasn't great but it meant they could move to

NEW YORK.



(top) Chic Stone at the 1996 Heroes Convention in Charlotte, NC.
(above) A job Chic did for the New York Herald Tribune in the 1960s.

JACK KIRBY: PRISONER OF GRAVITY

Interview transcribed by John Morrow

In 1992, Jack gave an interview for a Canadian television program called *Prisoners Of Gravity*. Here are some excerpts from that interview:

QUESTION: Jack, why did you become a cartoonist?

JACK KIRBY: I decided to become a cartoonist because I... well, I discovered comics all by myself. I was born on the Lower East Side of New York in a very restricted area, really. I just began to draw at a very young age, but it looked like I was marking up the tenement floor. I took to that sort of thing, and kept on with it until I drew more complicated forms. Gradually I found my way to Atlas Comics, which later became Marvel.

Q: Why were you so drawn to the superhero form?

JACK: Well, the superhero form, I think, is a feeling more than a drawing. I like people naturally, and I see people larger-than-life. That's the only way I can draw them, and superheroes came very naturally to me because that particular form of drawing seemed to represent my ideal of what I liked about men and women in general.

Q: Back in the early 1940s when you were getting started, one of the things you helped establish was the concept of the superhero's alter ego. Why did you decide your characters should have two sides to their personalities?

JACK: Because we all do. We all dream. Yes, we act realistically, but we dream beyond that reality, and our dreams make us larger. We all want to be larger, and we all want to see what's beyond all horizons. I believe it's part of the human make-up, and I reflect that in my drawings.

Q: Why were masks so important to that? Why did you want to have your heroes' faces covered?

JACK: Because we wear them. We find ourselves in situations in which we have to mask our true feelings. We have to look happy, or we have to look sad, but we may not feel like that on the inside. So I've instilled that in my characters too. And I believe that makes them more human, as well as the rest of their characteristics.

Q: What for you is the most important element in telling a story in comics?

JACK: The most important thing about telling a story is telling the story. In other words, to be understood; to let the other person know what the story is all about, what the story represents, whether it has a moral or not. The other person, if he understands my story, he'll understand all those various facets of it. So, I try to tell a story fully-rounded, and I believe that I've succeeded in that. If you read my comics you'll find that between the beginning and the end, there are all sorts of happenings, a variety of happenings, and that's how life is.

Q: But how do you lay that out on the page, in order to give it maximum impact?

JACK: Well, I gave it maximum impact. I gave it all the power I had in my own self. My heroes didn't merely walk, they ran. They had long strides. They

represented power, the power of the individual. I've always worshipped the individual because I felt that each individual has value, and by giving value to other individuals, I give value to myself. And of course, that's self-satisfaction. I've lived my life that way, and I've been happiest that way.

Q: When you originally created Captain America, what were you

IS LOKI ANY PURER THAN THOR? WHY HAS ODIN BEEN KINDER TO LOKI? ODIN SAYS "SILENCE!" / I WON'T BE QUESTIONED!



THAT'S WHAT'S WRONG HERE! THE CHALLENGING OF ODIN'S WISDOM! THAT'S WHAT'S BROUGHT ON MY GROWING WRATH!

LOOK AT THOR ON EARTH! HE REJECTED HIS POWERS-- NOW LOOK AT HIM

Uninked pencils to Thor #147, page 7.

JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY #101: THE PENCILS!

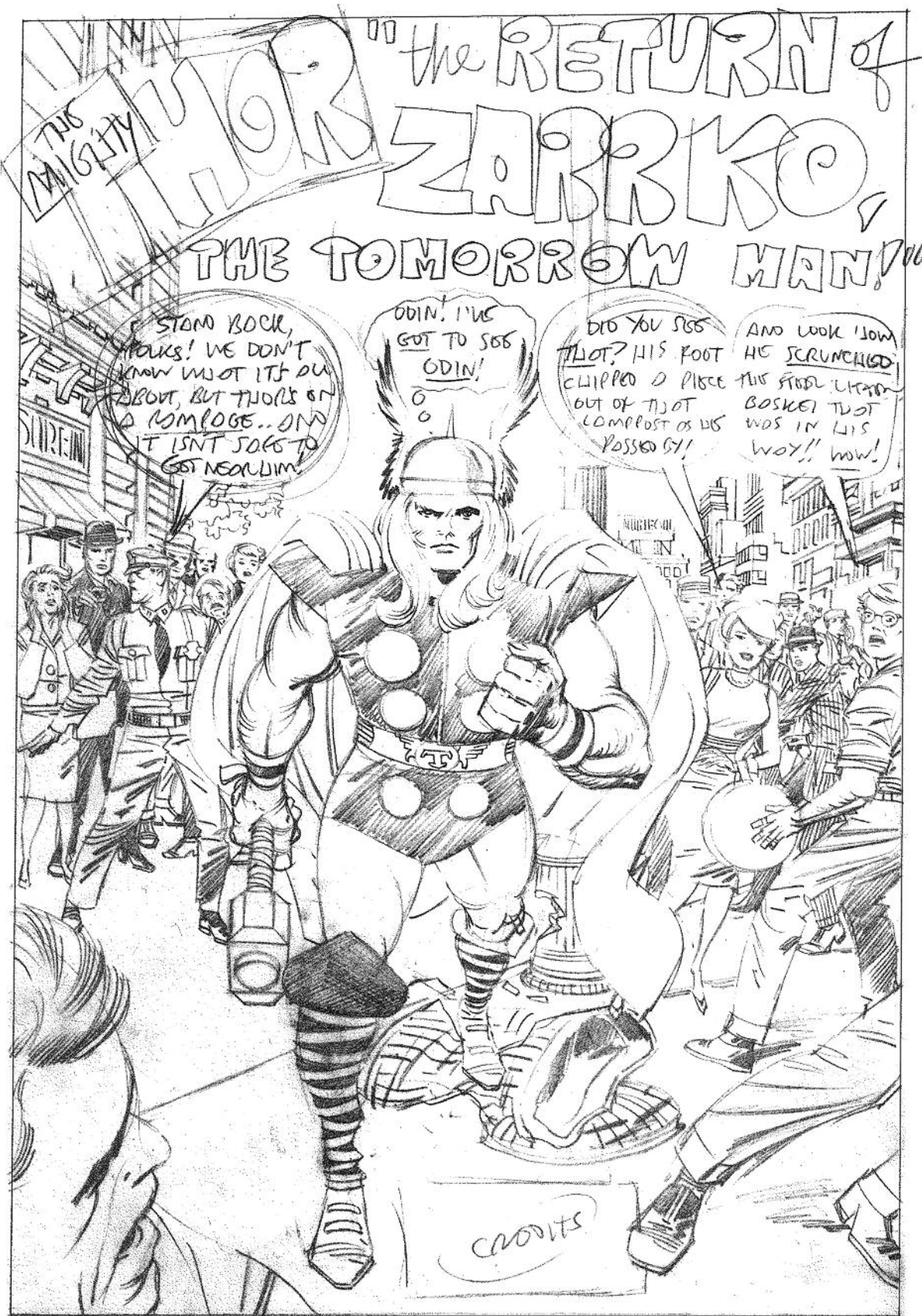
by John Morrow, with thanks to Danny Serafin and Dick Ayers

Journey Into Mystery #101 is a landmark issue: It signaled the return of the Lee/Kirby team to the book after a string of less-than-breath-taking issues. But few examples of Jack's Marvel pencils exist from that period. So imagine my surprise when I received a package in the mail, and found pristine stats of Jack's entire 13-page story pencils from that issue!

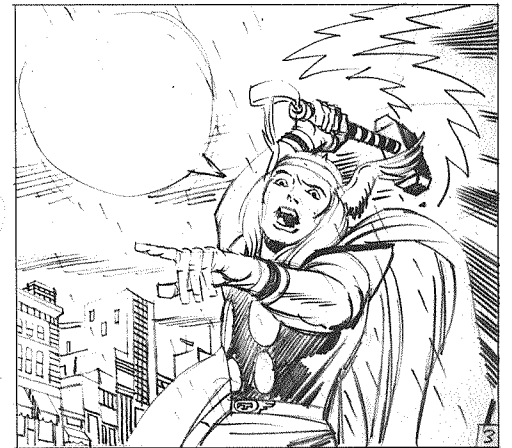
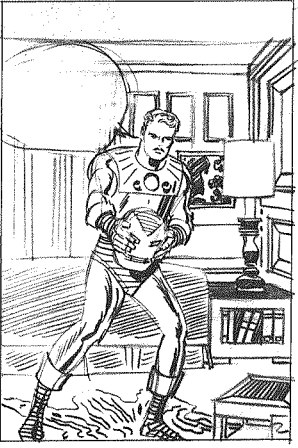
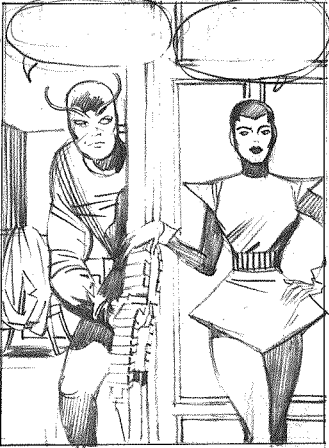
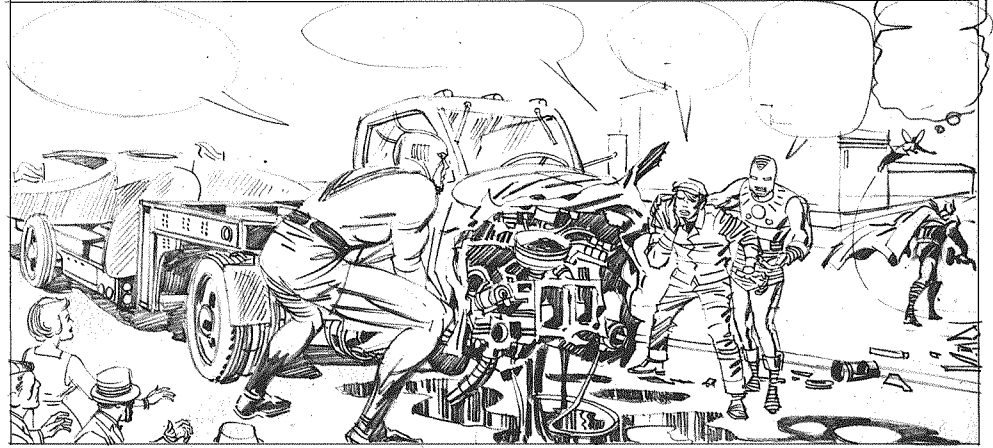
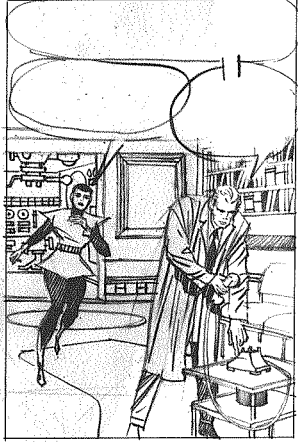
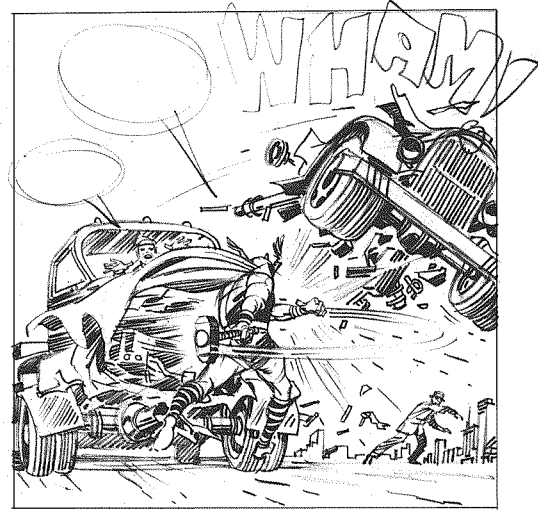
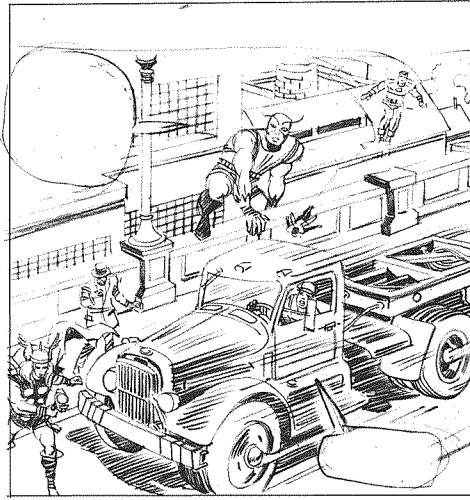
Subscriber Danny Serafin had gotten the stats from Dick Ayers, who had discovered them in his files. Dick isn't sure why he had stats from this particular issue, since George (Roussos) Bell inked JIM #101. But we thank both these gentlemen for sharing this historic find with us.

Despite the throw-away nature of the Tomorrow Man villain, this issue has a lot going for it. The Avengers make a cameo appearance, and we get early appearances by Loki, Heimdall, and Odin. Starting with the next issue (#102), Chic Stone took over inking for an extended run, so these pages also give us the chance to see the quality of pencils Chic was working on at this early stage in Marvel's history, when he inked so many key issues.

The handwriting on the splash page is Stan Lee's, but unfortunately, the few margin notes were cropped to the point of being illegible (they don't appear to be in Jack's handwriting, but it's hard to be sure with so little showing). But the pencils are pure Kirby, so sit back and enjoy this rare glimpse of early pencils by the man who helped put Marvel on the map. **T**



Here's the first of nine pages of pencils from Jack's 13-page story in Journey Into Mystery #101. We'll try to run the remaining pages in a future issue.



THE PROS & CONS OF VINCE COLLETTA

WHY I LIKE COLLETTA'S INKS

by Tony Seybert

Journey Into Mystery #108 contains "Trapped By The Trolls", one in a series of Tales of Asgard that supplemented the regular *Thor* strip for several years during the Marvel Age of Comics. I read "Trapped By The Trolls" for the first time in the early '80s and I was very impressed; it's still one of my favorites from the Tales of Asgard series. There was no mistaking those great Kirby pencils, but I didn't recognize the inker. I was familiar with Dick Ayers, Chic Stone, George (Roussos) Bell and others, but not with the delicate, airy lines of "Trapped By The Trolls." I flipped back to the credits and found the name of the inker to be... Vince Colletta.

Vince Colletta?

I was familiar with the work of Vince Colletta, and hadn't been impressed with some of his work in the past. I specifically remembered *Dazzler*, a series my brother collected. I read it as I read all the comic books that passed through the house, but I never liked the ill-conceived, badly-done series. Colletta's uninspired inking was not entirely responsible for *Dazzler*'s failure or its lack of charm, but it certainly didn't help.

But I like Colletta's work on Kirby's *Thor*.

Journey Into Mystery Annual #1 appeared a few months after "Trapped By The Trolls." There are several classic *Thor* reprints in it and a map of Asgard, but the major attraction is a 15-page story, "When Titans Clash! Thor Vs. Hercules!" The mists of time part to reveal a tale that was never celebrated by ancient scribes, never sung by roving bards. Thor and Loki, seeking adventure in The Heroic Age of the Tales of Asgard series, are separated during a battle with Storm Giants. Somehow (the text is unclear), Thor makes his way to a magical realm that he instinctively knows is Olympus,

home of the Greek gods. He encounters Hercules on a narrow bridge and, as neither will give way, they join in glorious battle, each testing the mettle of the other. They beat on each other for a long time. Thor and Hercules are equally matched and neither will concede in the futile struggle. Finally, Zeus appears and separates the headstrong godlings, blessing each for his courage and nobility and encouraging them to be comrades. Zeus then transports Thor back to Asgard where the Thunder God meets up with Loki and they ride off into the sunset.

Vince Colletta's inks look great over Kirby's pencils. Colletta's sketchy, airy style is perfect for Tales of Asgard and the dream-like story in the first *Journey Into Mystery Annual*. The thick lines of a Dick Ayers or a Chic Stone are perfect for the comparative reality of a con-

temporary *Thor* tale, but for the tales set in the distant past of myth and legend, Colletta's soft, delicate inks evoke the vapors of ancient times. Scenes of mythic places like Asgard and Olympus appear as through Mimir's magical scrying pool. The reader is looking into an ancient era that is not quite in focus, a world of faerie, a land of dream-clouds.

Colletta did his best work on Kirby's *Thor*, feathering the King's powerful, god-like figures. The delicate lines of Colletta are just as effective on Asgardian crags as on the sylvan glades of Olympus. The Kirby/Colletta Thor is a mighty blond deity with a hint of Norse faerie-dust. Hercules is a roughly-hewn sculpture, almost incomplete, like one of the unfinished prisoners of Michelangelo. Zeus himself appears out of the

fog, forming from the mist of the Godhead to restrain the young deities.

One panel in particular deserves special attention. At the bottom of page 4, Thor looks on some celebrating Olympians. A dancing satyr plays the pipes; a red-haired nymph strums a lyre; a centaur claps; two others look on, smiling. It seems doubtful that any of these characters



Inspired inking by Colletta; these are the original, unaltered inks to Journey Into Mystery #123's cover.

WALT SIMONSON INTERVIEWED

Interviewed by Jon B. Cooke, transcribed by John Morrow

Walt Simonson's career has included a number of projects with connections to Jack Kirby. His first big break in comics was on the Manhunter strip in Detective Comics #437-443, written by Archie Goodwin. He solidified his position as a fan favorite on Thor in the 1980s, and his current work includes covers for DC's Jack Kirby's Fourth World. This interview was conducted by telephone on December 16, 1996.

THE JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR: Did you read Kirby as a kid?

WALTER SIMONSON: My grandmother lived in a small Iowa town above a drug store. In the store, I can remember finding one of the Atlas horror comics; it had "The Glob", a wonderful story about a giant stone statue, and some poor guy who gets suckered into painting it with all this muddy, giant thick Jack Kirby paint that resembled Paste-Pot Pete's paste. *(laughter)* He was instructed to paint the statue and leave before midnight. Of course he painted the statue and got stuck in an earthquake or something equally ridiculous, *(laughter)* and at midnight the statue came alive. He was the advance forward of an alien race; weren't they all? *(laughter)* I think the guy managed to douse it in turpentine, and the paint thinned, and the creature's powers went away just in time. I didn't buy it, but I remember reading it in the store a number of times, and I've since obtained a copy. I remember being struck by it, partly because it was so "rough and ready" compared to the comics I was used to seeing, and partly because the coloring was so rough. That was the first Kirby job I saw that made enough of an impression that I remember it.

TJKC: How'd you get interested in comics?

WALTER: It was kind of a gradual process. In college I found a Marvel comic lying around. It was a *Mighty Thor*, the issue where the Grey Gargoyle returns (#113), inked by Chic Stone. It's the one where he's turning back into Thor, revealing his identity to Jane Foster, except Odin is so P.O.'ed, he robs him of his powers. He can't turn into Thor, and Jane thinks she's got this lunatic for a boyfriend. "Thor shall live again for thirty seconds! Make each one count!" Words that are burned into my brain! *(laughter)* I can't remember the stuff I wrote last week; I can remember the stuff Stan and Jack did thirty years ago. *(laughter)*

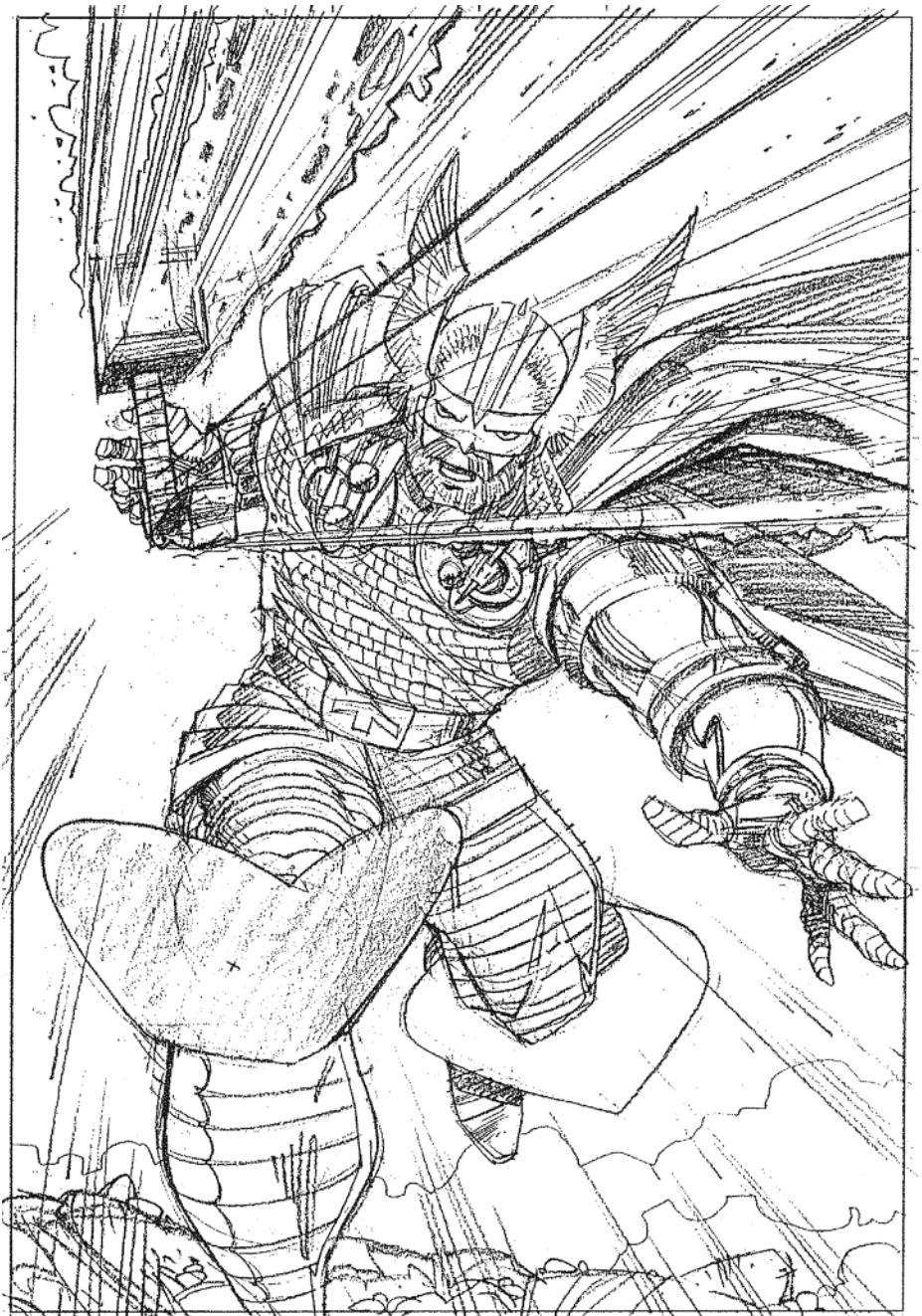
But I'd never seen a comic like that before. There was one where the opening splash was Thor and a bunch of the vikings and his dad on a flying viking ship, and they went off to fight some giants. There's a couple of pages of just a big battle. The caption said, "We promised Jack Kirby we'd do a couple of battle scenes to start with, so here they are, no extra charge", or something like that. I remember it because it's the first time I came across the mention of Jack's name. I remember wondering if Jack Kirby were some fan, some kid who'd written in and said, "Gee, I love to see a couple of pages of a fight scene." *(laughter)*

(left) Walter generously inked this pencil drawing for our back cover. Jack originally drew this piece and traded it to fan-artist Carl Taylor for one of his drawings, to encourage Carl to produce large pieces for art galleries.

Somewhere after that I ran across *Thor* #118, the first issue of the Destroyer. I read it, and at the end of that issue Thor is half-buried in this diamond-hard floor, and this bolt of pure energy is blasting at him from the Destroyer. He's imminently doomed. And of course I couldn't find the next issue. As it so happened, *JIM* #120 and #121 happened to be on sale at the same time; they hadn't taken #120 off the stand. I must've biked back there two or three times to read them. It was a ten-mile round trip! *(laughter)* That was where I began reading Marvel comics; with *Thor*, and with Stan and Jack's work on the book.

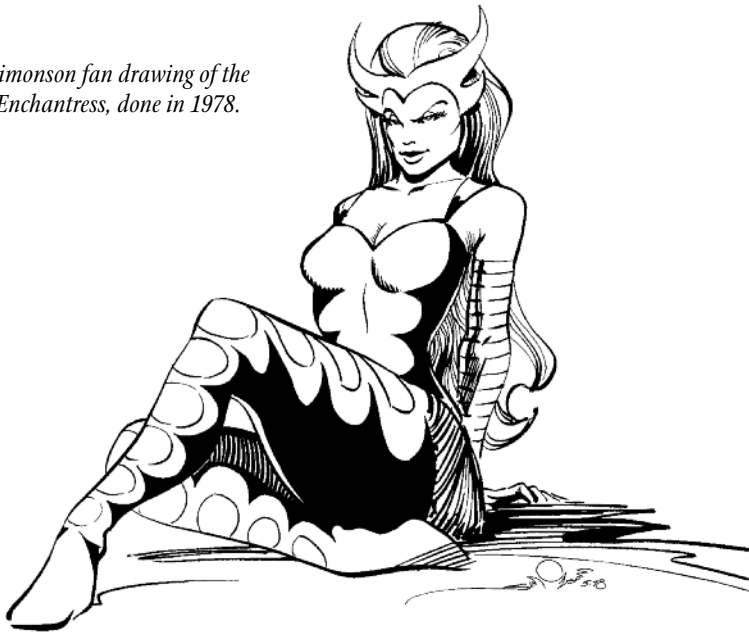
TJKC: Did you finally start buying them? *(laughter)*

WALTER: I did eventually. After three or four trips back to the store, I said, "This is really stupid!" *(laughter)* Spend the twelve cents and buy



Simonson breakdowns from Thor #380 (later finished by Sal Buscema).

Simonson fan drawing of the Enchantress, done in 1978.



the damn things”, which I did. I never looked back. (laughter)

TJKC: How’d you break into comics?

WALTER: I went to New York in August of 1972. Gerry Boudreau, my friend from The University of Rhode Island, had gotten a job for DC writing backup stories. He arranged for me to have an appointment with Archie (Goodwin). Archie at the time was not interested in using the stuff I had; I had the *Star Slammers* as a sample. Science fiction wasn’t mainstream comics for DC. I went to DC because, by the early 1970s when I was looking for work, DC was doing what I thought were the best comics in the business, including of course the Kirby Fourth World stuff, which I thought was fabulous. That was and remains some of my all time favorite comic books. At the time Chaykin was there, Kaluta was working on the Burroughs stuff and later *The Shadow*, Wrightson was doing *Swamp Thing*. There was a lot of young talent doing a lot of wonderful books.

After I walked out of Archie’s office, I went down to DC’s coffee room. Wrightson, Kaluta, Chaykin and Alan Weiss were all sitting around the table shooting the breeze. I showed them my stuff, and they liked the work. Kaluta showed it to Jack Adler, who was the second in command of production (after Sol Harrison). He showed it to Carmine Infantino, and I ended up talking to Carmine for about ten minutes, and he really liked the work I had. Essentially, Carmine called in three of his editors and made them all give me a job. (laughter) They were all short backup stories, so I walked out of his office with three jobs! (laughter) I did a story called “Cyrano’s Army”, (*Weird War Tales* #10) which was the first story I did professionally. Joe Orlando gave it to me and said, “It’s due yesterday.”

TJKC: Manhunter was a breakthrough for you, and fortuitously it’s also something Simon and Kirby did back in the forties. Did you refer at all to those old stories?

WALTER: Archie liked the name a lot, and the whole idea of “He hunts the world’s most dangerous game.” I eventually saw some of the Manhunters because DC reprinted them in those big 25¢ comics, in some of the Fourth World stuff. I remember Archie had a whole list of names we went through to choose this guy’s name, and eventually we just thought there was no reason not to use Paul Kirk, which was the name of the Kirby Manhunter. I don’t think we had the idea in the beginning to tie the continuity of the two strips together. As it developed, by the third chapter we did tie it together, where it turns out the original Paul Kirk, after WWII, had gone into retirement and become a big game hunter and gotten run down by a rogue elephant. He got picked up by some evil guys and they popped him into a cryogenic chamber and saved him, and he woke up thirty years later. So

eventually we did make him the same Manhunter, the same character in our continuity. But I don’t think Archie had that in mind to begin with, and I certainly didn’t know enough about the original Manhunter to have had much of an opinion to start with.

TJKC: In Manhunter, was the idea of a beginning, middle, and ending—a finite story—part of the original concept?

WALTER: No. By the time we were doing the fifth chapter, Archie had accepted a job at Warren, and was leaving DC Comics. Julie Schwartz was taking over as editor of *Detective Comics*, and Julie had no real interest in doing the Manhunter strip. And Archie, working for a different company, wouldn’t be able to write the strip. From somewhere around the fifth chapter, we decided that we’d try to wrap it all up. We hadn’t gotten around to doing a Manhunter/Batman crossover, although we’d thought about that as a possibility once Manhunter was established. It seemed like a fortuitous coincidence that we could do this crossover, get a twenty-page story out of the deal, and really wrap everything up in some fashion.

I was really into the Manhunter character. I really enjoyed doing it, and also I really enjoyed working with Archie. We really seemed to work together very well.

TJKC: Manhunter appeared for you in 1973 and 1974. In 1975, Kirby came out with a *First Issue Special* with Manhunter. Is there any connection?

WALTER: Nothing I know of. We’d kind of tied ours to Jack’s earlier work partly because we thought it gave the character a little extra resonance. In Manhunter, where we were doing just eight pages or so every month, tying Manhunter’s continuity back to some of the Simon and Kirby work really was the way of giving him a little extra elbow room of background that we felt kind of enlarged the character, hopefully without actually degrading the earlier work that had been done. But I don’t remember anything in the late Kirby Manhunter that was tied to what we had done, or had come out of it.

TJKC: You inked the cover to *Devil Dinosaur* #8. Was it a rush to ink Jack?

WALTER: Inking Jack was a gas. It was a thrill. I did ink a Fighting American cover for a portfolio (*Masterworks*) of Jack’s stuff. That might’ve been 1979. I remember they sent me the pencils, and I inked them on vellum. The *Devil Dinosaur* was probably inked on the original.

Part of the problem with Jack’s stuff is, it’s so powerful in pencil, it’s really hard to ink it and really retain the full flavor of the pencils. I think a lot of really good inkers have not been able to do that, and I’m not sure I did either. But it was really a challenge to try and ink it in a way that really captures as much of the flavor of the pencils as possible.

TJKC: Do you have a favorite Kirby inker?

WALTER: It probably depends on the job. My feeling is that when you read comics in the beginning, you get kind of imprinted by the stuff that you see. I really love Jack’s *Fantastic Four* from around #45, 46, the Galactus stuff. Maybe because I read them and enjoy them, I really like what Joe Sinnott did in those books. And in probably one of the most heretical moves a man can make in comic books, I kinda like Vinnie Colletta’s inking on *Thor*. Vinnie is the universally panned inker of Jack’s work, and I appreciate that. But I have to say that I thought on that particular book, there was something about the quality of this pagan god, and the fur and the wood textures, all that kind of stuff, that I thought Vinnie’s stuff worked for. I didn’t care much for his inking on the *Fantastic Four*, which I saw later on. It seemed too lightweight, it didn’t seem to have any volume to it. And I liked Vinnie’s work on *Thor*, even allowing for the fact that Vinnie used to erase entire armies or whatever he would do, all the things that were said about him as an inker.

TJKC: What’d you think of the Fourth World?

WALTER: I enjoyed them. I liked the first couple of issues that Royer

END OF AN ERA

by John Morrow

It's common knowledge now that Jack was pretty unhappy at Marvel in the late 1960s, and the next few pages may give us a better idea of what he was going through at the time.

On this page, you'll see a variety of pencil pages that for one reason or another didn't make it into *Thor*. Mark Evanier told me that Jack reached a point in the late 1960s where, if he drew a really spectacular full-page splash, he would sometimes set it aside to keep or sell at conventions; really nice pages could bring as much on the budding original art market as Marvel was paying him per page. (Don't forget, Jack wasn't getting his originals back from Marvel in the 1960s.) All these pages ended up being printed in the *Marvelmania Portfolio* (see *TJKC* #2-4), but margin notes weren't included, so it's difficult to tell what issue Jack may have originally intended them for. But the pages with Galactus on them were obviously meant for some issue(s) of *Thor* from #160-169, and the Karnilla/Loki page was apparently meant for #167.

On the next few pages are unused pencils that look to have been omitted from *Thor* #169, which featured Galactus' origin. Considering Jack co-created Galactus in *Fantastic Four*, it's understandable that he'd want some input into his origin. It's unclear whether or not Jack had an entirely different origin drawn for #169 (or if he avoided an origin story altogether), but there sure are a lot of rejected pages with Galactus on them, leading me to believe that #169 was the victim of major editorial tampering. (Some of the *Marvelmania Portfolio* plates may also be from #169.)

(In *Thor* #168, Stan Lee announced in his Soapbox column that Marvel was doing away with continued stories and sub-plots, so some of the Warriors Three pages may have been scrapped for that reason.)

One thing about #169 is clear; Jack was forced to change the ending of it. The original page 20 shows that Jack planned for Galactus to head back to Earth and heroically battle the Thermal Man side-by-side with Thor. Perhaps Stan Lee felt this wasn't in keeping with Galactus' persona as he envisioned it, and insisted Jack change the ending. Whatever the case, it appears #169 took the wind out of Jack's sails, and he gave a pretty half-hearted effort from *Thor* #170 until he left Marvel a few months later. It truly marked the end of an era for Marvel, *Thor*, and Kirby. ♣

BUT NOW TO LIVE ANGRY PEOPLE-- KARNILLA RAVES AT LOKI FOR ALMOST KILLING BALDER-- LOKI GRINGS-- KNOWS HER POWER



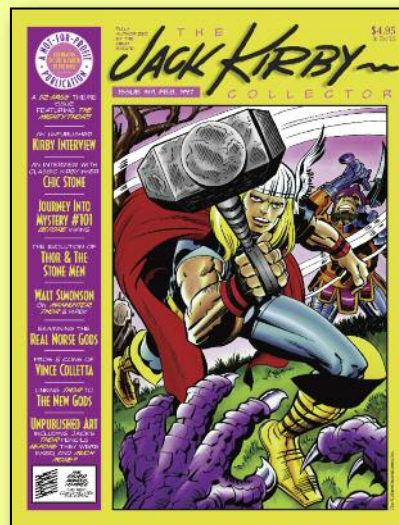
IT WAS ODIN'S INTERFERENCE THAT RUINED EVERYTHING, YELLS LOKI

(above) *Thor* #167 unused page, presented here with margin notes.
(below) Other unused *Thor* pages that made it into the *Marvelmania Portfolio*.





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