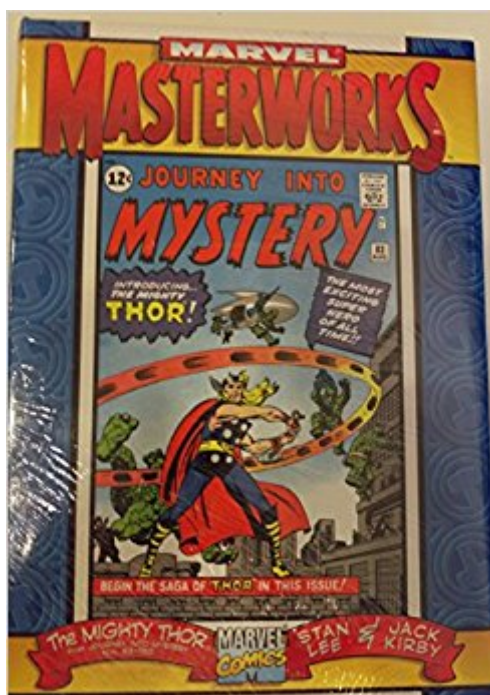


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Marvel Masterworks: The Mighty Thor Volume 1 (Reprints Journey Into Mystery #83-100) (ComicCraft Cover) (1999)



Synopsis

Marvel Masterworks The Mighty Thor from Journey Into Mystery Nos. 83-100. Reprints Journey Into Mystery #83, the first appearance of The Mighty Thor and the next 17 issues following his adventures. Starting with issue 97 it includes the Tales of Asgard featurette as well.

Book Information

Hardcover: 272 pages

Publisher: Marvel Entertainment Group (October 1, 1999)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0785107339

ISBN-13: 978-0785107330

Product Dimensions: 10.3 x 7.3 x 0.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 4.8 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 8 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #631,204 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #115 in Books > Arts & Photography > Drawing > Cartooning > Comics #2836 in Books > Comics & Graphic Novels > Publishers > Marvel #3668 in Books > Humor & Entertainment > Humor > Satire

Customer Reviews

Marvel Masterworks The Mighty Thor from Journey Into Mystery Nos. 83-100. Reprints Journey Into Mystery #83, the first appearance of The Mighty Thor and the next 17 issues following his adventures. Starting with issue 97 it includes the Tales of Asgard featurette as well.

Without a doubt, Jack Kirby's artwork is some of the most inventive in the superhero genre of comics. His bold lines and expressive figures are pop art in the purest sense. This volume which includes all the early Thor appearances are printed nicely in a hardcover edition. My one complaint is that somehow, the new, improved computer coloring seems somehow a little too slick, too polished. There's something about the bold, flat colors of vintage comics that added to their appeal. But it's nice to have these comics collected in a bookshelf edition and hopefully Marvel will continue to bring back the rest of the volumes.

After Stan Lee created the Fantastic Four and the Incredible Hulk with Jack Kirby and the Amazing Spider-Man with Steve Ditko, he and Kirby came up with the Mighty Thor. Lee kept trying to come up with somebody bigger, better and stronger than the Thing and the Hulk and was struck with the silly

notion of Super-God. But Lee had been hawking Marvel's comics as providing a 20th-century mythology and it suddenly occurred to him that maybe he could do a series feature a god as a comic book superhero. Turning to the Norse mythology of the Vikings, with their tales of Valhalla, Ragnarok, the Aesir, and eternal Asgard, Lee came up with Thor the Thunder God. This first volume of the Marvel Masterworks series devoted to Thor collects "Journey Into Mystery" issues #83-100. Most of the early stories are plotted by Lee, but scripted by Larry Leiber (his brother as it turns out to be) and drawn by Kirby (with Joe Sinnott and Dick Ayers providing the inks). What is interesting here is to reconsider the problematic element of Thor's origin in "Journey Into Mystery" #83. Lee thought it would be difficult for the average comic book reader to identify with a Norse Thunder God (especially one with long blonde hair, blue tights, and a winged helmet). So he created a secret identity with the old cliché of the frail and feeble Dr. Donald Blake, who is limping around Norway one day on a walking tour when he sees alien invaders from Saturn made of stone. Trapped in a cave he finds a secret chamber and a gnarled wooden stick. When Blake strikes the stick against a boulder it changes into a hammer and Blake becomes Thor. Fortunately the hammer offers an explanation: "Whosoever holds this hammer, if he be worthy, shall possess the power of...THOR" (yes, it has the dot-dot-dot). By issue #85 when Loki shows up, Lee starts availing himself of the rich aspects of Norse mythology, which makes the whole bit of the lame doctor turning into Thor a bit much. Eventually it would be revealed that Odin had turned Thor into a handicapped mortal to teach his son a lesson in humility, but that necessary revision was a long time in coming. Instead we have the standard superhero love triangle where Blake likes his nurse, Jane Foster, but she likes Thor. Meanwhile, beyond Loki, Thor's great arch nemesis, the villains all have the same problem: they are going up against a god. The Human Cobra (#98) and Mr. Hyde (#99) are above average villains, but do they really have a chance against the god of thunder? Radio-Active Man (#93) and Lava-Man (#97) have shots, but they are rather boring. Then there is the Carbon Copy Man from Outer Space (#90), who is the bottom of the barrel, and mixing and matching mythology with Merlin (#96). Clearly when Thor is dealing with Loki and other Asgardians the stories are much, much better. The gulf between the stories grounded in Norse mythology and those without is magnified in "Journey Into Mystery" #97 when Lee and Kirby started doing the "Tales of Asgard" shorts. Many times during this period the main Thor story did not match the five-page "Tales of Asgard" story at the end. This was also where Kirby's artwork reached a new level: compare "Journey Into Mystery" #83 with the "Surtur the Fire Demon" short from #99 (i.e., the first and last examples of Kirby's art in this volume), and you will see what I mean. But until the Lady Sif shows up, these Thor comic books are just treading water. Note: Later issues in this reprinted color collection are scripted by

Robert Bernstein and drawn by Joe Sinnott and Don Heck.

an incredible journey back to the days when thor started out as marvels answer to superman...when the mighty thor was hampered by having to pound his hammer any number of times to call upon the storms , lightning, earthquakes, tornados, ect...heck he even had "hurricane breath" in these first seminal appearances...and the ability to cause blinding sparks by rubbing his hands against the magic hammer "creating such intense friction"... these are great stories for those who read them long ago and for those of us who had no idea, thor ever had any of these now forgotten abilities...it would even be interesting to see some creators bring these powers back to the modern day god of thunder ..but let's leave the cheesy villians in the past....the thug??? yikes....

I am moved to write by the totally off the wall comments of the writer who trashed Kirby's artwork in early silver age Marvel comics. If you didn't like the books.....fine, but there is no doubt.... none... in any critical venue that Jack Kirby was the innovative genius in early 60's and 70's comic book penciling. I remember seeing my first issues of Fantastic Four, Thor, and Avengers comics. Soon a loyal Batman fan was a Marvel Fan Club Member. Obviously comic book artwork has evolved and so have comics as the tastes and sophistication of todays youth have changed and grown (although I wonder if it is for the better?), but for the times, Kirby was the undisputed Heavyweight Champion of Comics, and Thor was one of the reasons.

In all honesty, I'm writing this review because I'm sick of the anti-Kirby review being the first one on the page. Kirby is the greatest artist of all time, and this comes through very well on the early Thors. This was super-heroics on a grand, cosmic scale. While some people may not be capable of appreciating his style, they do need to realize that their favorite "new" artists all followed Kirby. He defined more of the artistic language of comics than any other three people, and only a select few (Eisner, Siegel & Schuster, a few others) contributed anywhere near the massive amount which Kirby did to the history of comics.

This was a trip down memory lane that was well worth the price. By far I enjoyed the stories drawn by Jack Kirby - his artwork is awesome!The stories are so basic and simplistic that one only has to browse the narration, no deep reading needed here. But I knew what to expect when I bought this book so I was not disappointed.Basic stories, good Kirby art (on most of the stories), and an enjoyable trip to the beginnings of "The Mighty Thor"!

Obviously this brainless fool from TN just wants to see his stupidity in print. Jack Kirby is known throughout the world as one of the most influential comic artists ever. Marvel did do everyone a disservice by having no-name artists touch-up the reprinting flaws in the Masterworks series but to insult Jack Kirby and his legacy is a good way to show how small your life experience is.

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